

These are the days we dream of



2023
ANNUAL REPORT

Malvern Retreat House 2023 Annual Report



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Mission Statement

*Rooted in the Catholic Faith, we provide retreats, programs,
and events that help people deepen their relationship
with God and find peace and healing.*

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*“Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though
everything depended on you.”*

- St. Augustine



2023 Annual Report Chairman's Letter

Watching the Men and Women of Malvern returning for their annual retreats so full of joy is proof that Malvern Retreat House is needed more today than at any time in our history. Our retreatants come here seeking refuge from the chaos in our world. Sadly, this “noise” is drowning out the voice of God. Those who come through our gates are longing to get closer to our Lord. They have a burning desire to walk these sacred grounds, to spend time in private adoration, to deepen their relationship with God, and find peace and healing.

By the grace of God, and our Board of Directors, staff, and the Men and Women of Malvern working together, we overcame the biggest challenge in our 112-year history. All of us can take credit for navigating our way through the pandemic years.

After three tough years, I am happy to report that our revenue in 2023, was the second highest in our history. No longer just surviving, Malvern Retreat House is thriving.

Revenue is not the only measurement of our success. In fact, it is not the first yardstick we use. The most important metric is the number of souls we touch. In 2023, by expanding our retreat offerings, our attendance grew to more than 13,000 men, women, young adults, and high school students.

One of the highlights of the year was the opening of our new Blessed Carlo Acutis Shrine and Center for Eucharistic Encounter. Located in what was formerly known as Lower McShain, this 5,000-square-foot shrine attracts people of all ages, especially our youth.

On October 1, 2023, more than 1,000 people came to our retreat house to see Antonia Acutis, the mother of this future saint. Acutis shared Carlo's life story and his love for our Lord Jesus Christ alive in the Eucharist.

It is not a coincidence that this beautiful shrine is located in the Hills of St. Joseph. Blessed Carlo urges us to live like the saints we were created to be. Our patron, St. Joseph, invites you to retreat from the noise so you can hear the whispers from the Cross and take the next steps in your journey to becoming a saint.

I wish you a wonderful retreat in 2024.

Prosit,

James R. Molinari

James R. Molinari
Chair of the Board of Directors



James R. Molinari
Chairman



*“Prayer enlarges
the heart until
it is capable of
containing God’s
gift of himself.”*

- Mother Theresa



Michael T. Norton
President



*"I sought the Lord,
and he answered me
and delivered me
from my fears."
- Psalm 34.4*

Dear Men and Women of Malvern,

This Annual Report provides an overview of Malvern Retreat House's successes in 2023. I encourage you to take the time to read the report from cover to cover. Whether you are a retreatant, board member, associate, or benefactor, I thank you for your part in making 2023 a very good year for our beloved retreat house.

Although the photos and charts provide a good overview, they cannot paint the full picture of St. Joseph's in-the-Hills. Only by looking behind them can you gain a complete understanding of what I term the *Miracle of Malvern*.

As you review the 2023 finances, the bottom-line numbers speak only to our financial standing. What you don't see in the revenue numbers are the dedicated C.A. Captains and recruiters spending countless hours calling to invite their members to their weekend retreat, working on the rooming and adoration schedules, and sacrificing their participation in some of the conferences and activities to address issues that could take away from your experience.

The pie charts don't show our dedicated kitchen staff who serve more than 100,000 meals annually. Nor can you see the housekeeping staff who have the daunting task of preparing all the rooms, conference centers, and chapels for the next arriving group. Buried somewhere deep in these numbers is the team who works around the clock maintaining our facilities and our beautiful 125 acres. Our front office staff is unknown to most retreatants; yet, without them, we could not host any retreats on these sacred grounds.

Each donor listed has their own story. A story of the sacrifice made to support our beloved retreat house. The 70-year Man of Malvern, for example, living on a fixed income, who every year gifts Malvern \$50.00. What has he given up to continue his support? Hidden in the numbers is the grieving mother who anonymously gifted \$10,000 to the Carlo Acutis Shrine to support our mission of bringing the message of the Holy Eucharist to our youth.

On the inside cover of this report is a list of our Board of Directors. These dedicated volunteers give up many nights and weekends looking for solutions to our current challenges and planning for our future.

Our Senior Staff, including myself, receive the kudos for a retreat well done. We gladly accept the compliments, but only on behalf of our entire team, our Associates, Board Members, and the Men and Women of Malvern. As one of our employees says, "Teamwork makes the dream work." Our success in 2023 was a dream come true.

As we move forward in 2024, let us all dream big because, thanks to you, the future of Malvern Retreat House is very bright.

Prosit,

Michael T. Norton

Michael T. Norton
President

2023 Development Update

I'm a big fan of the Christian artist Lauren Daigle. One of my favorite lyrics of hers is, ***"If it's not good, then it's not over."***

The moment I heard her song, "These are the days" (#LaurenDaigle #TheseAreTheDays), I felt it should be the Malvern Retreat 2023 song!

In 2020, people at Malvern Retreat House were saying, *"We thought we'd never see the sun through the dark skies."* Yet in 2023, we started saying, *"But all the signs are saying it's looking up."*

As you can read throughout this Annual Report, we not only are looking up spiritually (never stopped), but we can make a good business case for sustainable growth going forward.

The bedrock fundraising campaign each year is the Annual Appeal. The first ever *MayDay for Malvern* on May 1, kicked off the appeal and ended with a 14 percent increase in dollars raised by year's end. That's a good start for something we must build upon annually. Most important, is the number of participants giving to the annual appeal was up a respectable 4 percent! In a year every philanthropic expert called "soft" for giving, our donors defied the cultural trend. Again, Daigle sings it best, *"People out there, let go of your cares, turn your cries into loud hallelujahs."*

The goodness of generous donors to Malvern Retreat subsidized nearly \$70,000 in financial assistance to those homeless, physically and intellectually challenged, unemployed, in recovery, or in some state of life-changing transition. YOUR gifts enabled each one to come as they were in pursuit of "a deeper relationship with God." Our mission is that they left having found healing and peace.

This is the Malvern Retreat mission to which we have been called, and for which our donors are supporting so generously. THANK YOU.

I hope you will consider continuing that support in 2024 so that all may benefit!

James Catrambone

James Catrambone
Director of Development



Jim Catrambone
Director of
Development



YOU were there
for us, so now
we are here
for you.



Father Douglas
Michael McKay



*"Prayer is the inner
bath of love into
which the soul
plunges itself."*

- St. John Vianney

Recently, I discovered there are only four Rectors in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia: Saint Charles Seminary, Saint Peter and Paul Basilica, Saint Joseph's Villa (retirement home for priests), and Saint Joseph's in-the-Hills, Malvern Retreat House. Such an honor to be one of the four!

My affiliation with our retreat house began in 1972, when I began discerning my priestly vocation. I experienced two highlights. The first was when I met Monsignor James Meehan for a "one-on-one" meeting to discuss my vocation. In his humility, gentleness, and compassion, he said to follow my heart, keep near to the Blessed Mother, and stay close to the Blessed Sacrament. The second happened at Saint Joseph's Oratory where I met our Eucharistic Lord on another "one-on-one" meeting. My 20 minutes with Him seemed like 20 seconds. I felt myself outside the temporal, and inside the eternal; outside the world, and inside heaven; outside myself, and inside God. No words were spoken, yet I strongly felt the call to priesthood and the call to return to Saint Joseph's in-the-Hills for a deeper spirituality.

My classmates and I retreated to Saint Joseph's in-the-Hills in May 1982, to prepare for priesthood. John Cardinal Krol interviewed us — one-on-one. He was all business.

"Tell me, Douglas, why should I ordain you?" he asked, with laced fingers and chin resting on his knuckles.

"Because I feel God's call to priesthood."

"Feelings change," he said.

"Well, this one hasn't. For years I have been living a celibate life."

I'll never forget that retreat week at Saint Joseph's in-the-Hills, and so many other retreats.

In 1986, a Board Member asked if I would be interested in becoming the next Rector of our retreat house. For several reasons, I declined the offer, but the "Lord of Malvern" planted His seed in me to be His future Rector. It was all "On Schedule as Planned." God's plan, of course.

Then, after 50 years of personal and preached retreats (before Easter of 2023), I was asked again to consider being Rector at Saint Joseph's in-the-Hills. After much prayer, many mystical signs and discernment, I finally said a happy, "Yes!"

Being Rector has brought me — and the retreatants I serve — closer to the merciful love of God. Truly, I have witnessed many signs and wonders in the conversions of our repentant brothers and sisters. May His peace and healing grace continue to deepen the conversions of all who come to the "Hills of Saint Joseph's Retreat House" in 2024, for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and for our own sanctification.

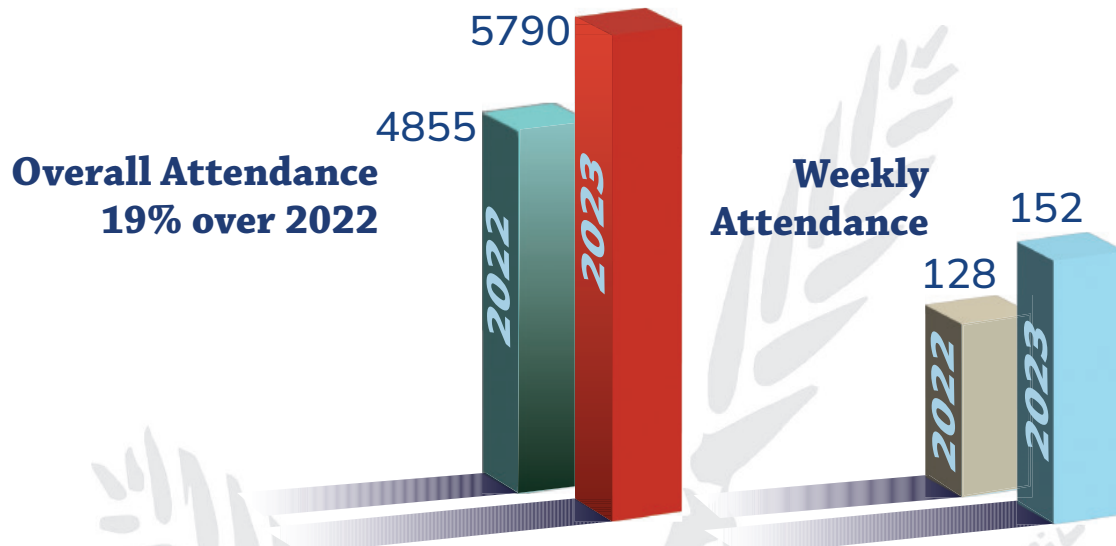
Prosit,

Father Douglas Michael McKay

Father Douglas Michael McKay

Rector

Recruiting and Retention



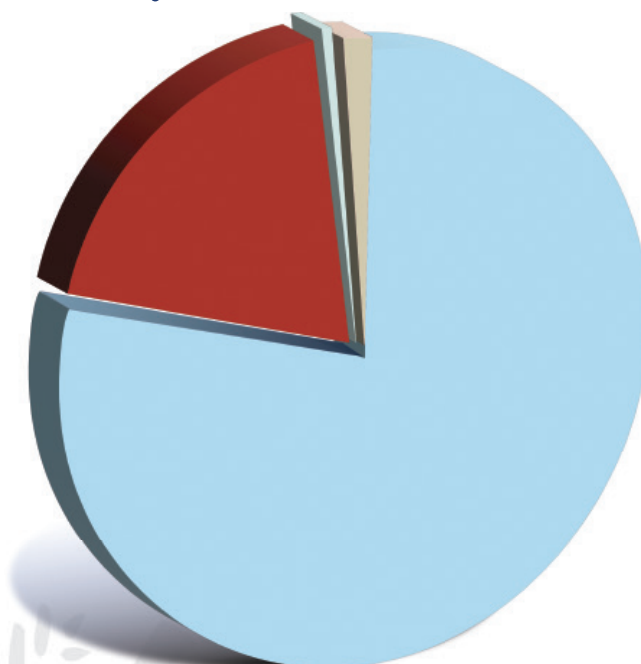
Diversity of Retreats

Organization/Retreat	Description
Calix Society	Catholic Spiritual Supplement to 12 step recovery.
Militia Immaculata Village	Marian prayer group following the teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe.
Apostles of Jesus Missionaries	African Missionaries to the world.
Christ in the City	Young adults befriending and caring for the homeless.
Philly Frassati	Human and Spiritual formation for young adults.
Catholic Leadership Institute	Ignite the Parish, Embolden the Clergy, Forge the future.
Catholic in Recovery	Catholic Men and Women's addiction recovery.
Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious	Women Religious Leadership Council.
Amnion Crisis Pregnancy Center	Offering hope and support in an unplanned pregnancy.
Sisters of Life	Women's Religious order serving to evangelize and offer crisis pregnancy help.
Villanova University Posse Plus	Villanova students peer mentorship retreat.
Brothers and Sisters of Charity	Ordinary people seeking to live a monastic charism in the secular world.
St. Thomas Sryo-Malibar Catholic Eparchy of Chicago	Catholics of Indian descent whose church history traces back to St. Thomas the Apostle.
Cursillo	Helping to creatively give life to the essential Christian Truths of the Person.
Benedicta Institute for Women	A forum to educate and train Catholic women to be leaders and mentors.
Women of Grace	Affirming Women's dignity and vocation as daughters of God.
Godsplaining Podcast Retreat	Dominican Young Adult retreat for listeners of their popular podcast.
Reform Wellness	Professionals helping people develop Christ-centered whole-person health.
Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal	Women Religious evangelizing and serving the poor in NYC and NJ.
John Paul II Seminary	Annual retreat of seminarians from the Archdiocese of Washington, DC.

Financial Information for 2023 Operations

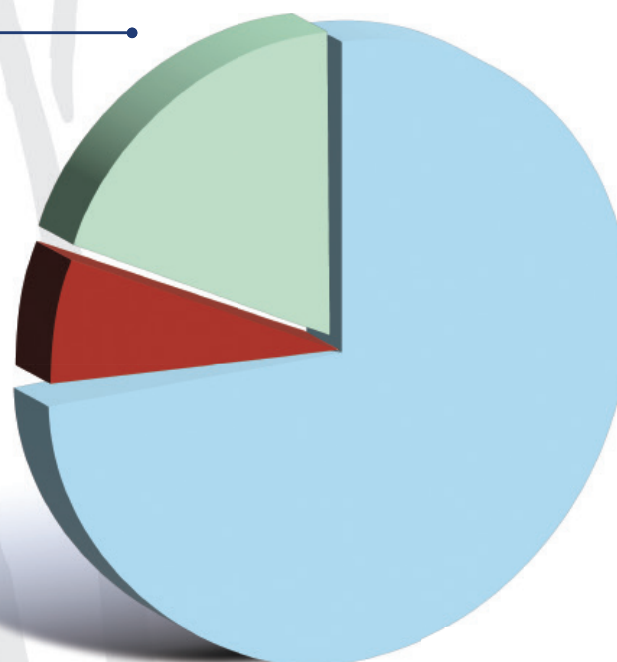
REVENUE

Retreats	\$3,419,242
Development	709,620
Other Income	40,011
Capital Campaign	1,404
Investment Income	312,644
Total Revenue	\$ 4,482,921



EXPENSES

Retreats	\$3,213,823
Administration	848,347
Development	266,956
Total Expense	4,329,126
Less: Asset Depreciation	384,281
Total Expense, less: Depreciation	\$3,944,845

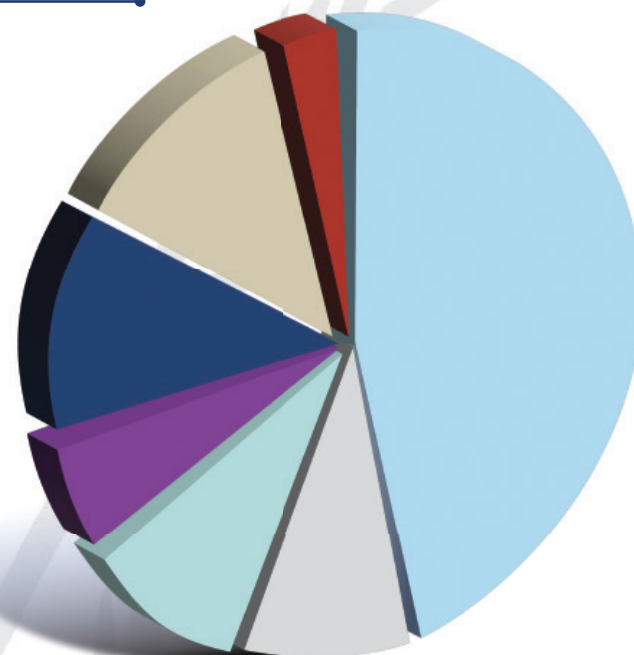


Financial Information for 2023 Operations

SOURCES OF FUNDS

Annual Fund	\$354,685
Major Gifts	104,968
Membership	69,637
Special Events	73,368
Deferred Gifts	54,300
Remembrance	41,712
Memorial Fund	10,950

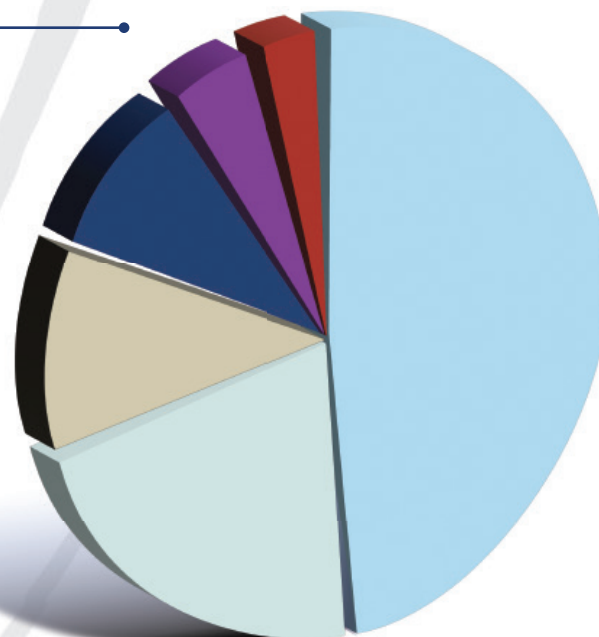
Total Development Revenue
\$709,620



USE OF FUNDS

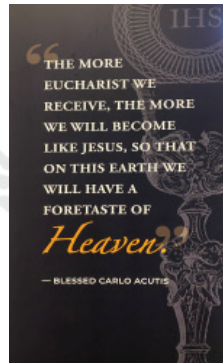
Fundraising	\$145,752
Administration	57,559
Allocated Expenses	29,506
Printing & Postage	26,955
Remembrance	6,506
Memorials	678

Total Development Expense
\$266,956



Funds Allocated for Projects \$442,664

Significance of Blessed Carlo Acutis Exhibit



The next steps – just the beginning

Divine inspiration and a mother's joy filled the Blessed Carlo Acutis Shrine and Center for Eucharistic Encounter in 2023. From a modest exhibit in an alcove in 2022, to a 5000-square-foot shrine and Eucharistic experience encompassing all of Lower McShain Hall. Malvern Retreat House Board Member Mary Bea Damico and her niece, Kara Tabella, are the driving forces and continued inspiration in the shrine's development. Mary Bea "knew the Lord and Blessed Carlo were calling us to go further with more miracles and creating a space of Eucharistic Encounter." Kara too, focused on Blessed Carlo, "he was about leading people to Jesus through the Eucharist and all of us becoming saints."

The 2023 transformation includes an expanded display of the Eucharistic miracles documented by Blessed Carlo, a section dedicated to the Blessed Mother, a hallway of Saints who had mystical encounters with the Eucharist, an altar for Mass and Adoration, the Blessed Carlo room chronicling his life, a space to kneel and pray before the image of Carlo, and a traveling exhibit that is shared with parishes in the diocese.

At the dedication ceremony, Damico said, "Exactly one year later and it was filled with kids, and it was just a beautiful and profound experience... a lot of us started to really understand the divine magnitude of the mission to be relevant and transformative to a new generation."

"Oh Carlo," said Antonia Acutis, Blessed Carlo's mother, as she entered the Shrine in October and saw her son's image. Damico noted there is a deep sense of loss about Mrs. Acutis, but "she has an amazing faith that enables her to lift above the sadness to embrace great joy and carry on his mission." A dedication ceremony included a special Mass and Eucharistic Procession for youth and families on October 1 at Malvern Retreat House.

Mrs. Acutis provided the keynote address and answered questions from among the 1,000 attendees. "When you walk into the shrine," said Acutis, "you walk into the heart of Carlo and the heart of Jesus." She shared that Carlo, as he was entering that last year of his young life, told her the next step of their mission was to create permanent exhibits and she felt this was a fulfillment of his desire. Acutis wants to continue to stay involved with the Shrine and is expected to return to Malvern Retreat House in 2025. Tabella stated, "This is just the beginning and now our work continues to bring the youth to this beautiful center of Eucharistic Encounter."



*"The Eucharist is the
highway to Heaven."*
-Blessed Carlo Acutis

Malvern Retreat House Retreatant Profiles



The Petrongolo Family
The Sons of Italy Retreat

PERFECT SPIRITUAL/SOCIAL FAMILY REUNION WEEKEND

For the Petrongolo Family, attending the annual Sons of Italy Retreat is more than a spiritual mecca, it is a family reunion steeped in tradition. This tightknit clan, which owns a general construction company with offices in Philadelphia and Blackwood, NJ, includes four generations, all devoted to attending the retreat. "It's not only a nice spiritual weekend, for us it's also a great family reunion," said John Petrongolo, Senior (John, Sr.).

"At last year's retreat," said John, Sr., "I looked over the list of retreatants and realized that 80- to 90-percent of them were either our relatives, friends, or co-workers." (read the full story on page 12)

A GYMNASIUM TO EXERCISE YOUR SPIRITUALITY

"The best men I know in this world are my Matt Talbot 57 brothers. This is the greatest group of men you'll ever belong to, and this brotherhood means everything to me," said Thomas "Tom" Betteridge. After 20 years of regular attendance, Tom calls the Matt Talbot 57 medallion he received at his first retreat, one of his most cherished possessions.

Tom was first brought to a Matt Talbot 57 retreat by his grand sponsor, the late, retired firefighter Jimmy Anderson, and now feels it is his duty to introduce new members to this valuable resource. He credits Matt Talbot 57, and St Joseph's in the Hills, as a key part of his sobriety, calling the two years he skipped as his most trying in terms of sobriety and mental health. (read the full story on page 12)



Thomas Betteridge
*Matt Talbot 57 and
Sons of Italy Retreats*



Michael Ridgway
Six-Three Spiritual Retreat

FAMILY BONDING... COMMUNITY BUILDING

When Michael Ridgway, aged 24, began going to the annual Six-Three Spiritual Retreat at the Malvern Retreat House, it was because he had heard his grandfather, Bob Perricone, talk about how much it meant to him after attending every year. Timed to align with Father's Day, Michael was 17 and still in high school when he decided he wanted to go with his father and grandfather in 2017.

Not sure what to expect, he found the other retreatants extremely welcoming, warm, and encouraging — so much so, that his initial experience convinced him to make Six-Three a continuing part of his life. He says, "That's something that really stood out to me, that level of community, caring, and looking out for each other. It's something that I really try and emulate in my personal life." (read the full story on page 14)

OUR LADY OF PEACE JOYFUL... PEACEFUL... RENEWAL

Many of those who are regular retreatants at Malvern Retreat House began attending because of a recommendation from a family member or friend. That's how it started for Bonnie Stewart, aged 62, who has been attending retreats for 22 years. Her friend Steven Lewis suggested it to her after his friend Phil Ricci suggested it to him. Now Bonnie's daughter, Heather Tuck, aged 43, has been going with her for six years. And so it goes — retreatants love Malvern so much they spread the word.

"The number one reason we go to Malvern is so my daughter and I can spend time together," says Bonnie. "We've also developed friendships over the years with the ladies." Bonnie adds, "The time to read, unwind and reflect re-energizes us so when we go home, we can face whatever heads our way." Heather agrees that the peace and relaxation are important, adding, "It's also a good time to strengthen our relationship with God and have that freedom where that's all we're focusing on, not the day-to-day worries of life." (*read the full story on page 14*)



**Bonnie Stewart
and Heather Tuck**
Our Lady of Peace Retreat

HEALING AND RELIEF

Last year, when Jackie Rosa attended the Matt Talbot 49 Women's Retreat for recovering alcoholics, she didn't know what to expect. Three years sober and struggling under the strain of supporting herself, a fourteen-year-old daughter and eight-year-old son after a recent divorce, she was talked into going by "girlfriends" who had been there and knew the retreat could help. Her friends even arranged for a scholarship. Which made it possible for her to attend. (*read the full story on page 19*)



Jacqueline Rosa
Matt Talbot Women – W49

SAN FRANCISCO AND SANTA MARIA DE GUADALUPE FAITH... COMMUNITY...SUPPORT

Malvern Retreat House offers two Spanish speaking retreats, one for men – San Francisco in November – and one for women, Santa Maria De Guadalupe, in September. Husband and wife, Cesar (nicknamed "Lalo") and Martha Quintana, Peruvian immigrants living in Phoenixville, PA, have been attending their respective retreats for more than five years. Martha, who works as the office supervisor at Malvern Retreat House, got her job because of a referral from her Phoenixville parish, St. Norbert's. She helped establish the first Spanish retreat. Martha, a devout Catholic, says she keeps coming to the retreats because of a need to be in contact with God. (*read the full story on page 19*)



Cesar and Martha Quintana

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(Cont'. on pages 13-29)

"Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths."

- Psalm 25:4



The Petrongolo Family

*Perfect Spiritual/
Social Family Reunion
Weekend*

(Cont'. from page 9) It all began in 1963, as John, Sr. recounts, when his grandfather and uncle attended their first Sons of Italy retreat. Soon his grandfather brought along his five sons, including John, Sr.'s father, Joseph, Senior, now 94 years old, who has been attending the Sons of Italy retreat religiously for more than 55 years.

Next came the third generation of 24 grandsons, including Joseph, John Sr., James ("Jamie"), Jeffrey ("Jeff") and Jerry, who have been attending for about 30 to 50 years. Next, the fourth generation of 14 great-grandsons, now in their 30s, who also attend annually, along with their many cousins, uncles, and in-laws. The fifth generation is set to join them in the next three-to-four years.

A high point of the retreat weekend is the Stations of the Cross where they walk up and down the hilly grounds from station-to-station, while singing. The Sons of Italy retreats also feature guest speakers, such as retired football players Ron Jaworski and Kevin Riley, radio talk show hosts, and other well known catholic speakers. "We're especially fond of these informative, topical discussions, and always get a great education," John, Sr. said, adding that getting high-profile guest speakers is critical to attracting and retaining younger members.

John, Sr.'s younger brother, Jeff Petrongolo, sums it up this way. "Whenever our family gets together on other occasions, a lot of times we're talking about Malvern Retreat House and making our plans for the next retreat. It's something we all share that makes our close-knit family even closer."



Thomas Betteridge

*Matt Talbot 57 and
Sons of Italy Retreats*

(Cont'. from page 9) "If you have that empty feeling, problems you're not sure how to resolve, or just want to get rid of that weight on your shoulders, this is the way to do it," Tom explains to new recruits. "It's like going to a gymnasium where you can exercise your spiritual growth and strengthen your relationship with God."

Compared to the serious atmosphere of a Matt Talbot 57 retreat, where many recovering alcoholics consider attending a matter of life and death, his other retreat group the Sons of Italy, is a more lighthearted, relaxed social experience.

Tom was first introduced to the Sons of Italy retreat by two friends who suggested the change of pace and family atmosphere. Committed to expanding the community, Tom now invites others, such as his son-in-laws – 26-year-old Vinnie and 25-year-old Mike, as well as Mike's Dad – to accompany him on upcoming retreats.

"The Sons of Italy retreats are a great way for fathers to pass on spirituality to their sons," said Tom. As someone who puts in long work weeks in the Utilities Department of the Philadelphia Convention Center, Tom looks forward to his time at Malvern Retreat House, shutting off his phone, sitting by the shrines, and walking the relaxing grounds. He says, "The life lessons and serenity you get there are just priceless."

2023 ANNUAL APPEAL DONORS

(Cont'. from page 11)

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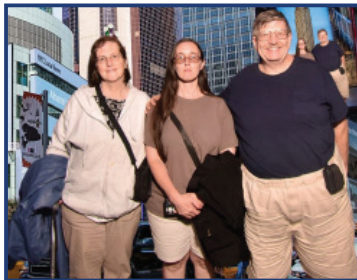


Michael Ridgway
*Six-Three Spiritual
Retreat*

(Cont'. from page 10) Michael continues to attend Six-Three every year with his father and grandfather. He even serves on the executive committee that plans the retreat each year after the older members of the committee recognized his interest and asked if he wanted to participate. He continues to enjoy the interactions with the older members of the committee when discussing potential speakers and activities. How to spread the word about the value of the retreat to younger people through different social media channels is a key concern he shares with everyone on the committee.

Another reason Michael is hooked on the Six-Three retreat is its Father's Day theme. He values the bonding with his father and grandfather that gets stronger every year, and enjoys learning from the other multigenerational family attendees. He also enjoys the community that has developed with those he sees each year at the retreat, as well as hearing from other families who share his values. Michael appreciates the opportunity to learn and be mentored by a widening social group of like-minded retreatants.

Because the Six-Three Retreat community is so valuable to Michael, he has suggested having other bonding events throughout the year to keep people connected. For Michael, helping to grow the Six-Three community is well worth his time and effort.



Bonnie and Heather
Our Lady of Peace Retreat

(Cont.' from page 10) Bonnie, Heather, and Steve all are members of the same non-denominational Christian church in Springfield, PA. Each had wondered whether they would feel out of place, not being Catholic. But all now agree they received a very warm, welcoming feeling from everyone at the retreats. For example, Heather says, "When I first went, I had no idea what 'Adoration' was. But once it was explained to me, I was like, oh, it doesn't matter. That quiet, alone, prayer-time with God, that's no different whether you're Catholic or another type of Christian."

Now, with the retreat a regular part of their lives, Bonnie and Heather have become co-captains of the Our Lady of Peace Retreat that takes place in mid-September. They knew that Carmen DiPasquale, who had been leading that retreat, was looking for volunteers to take over some of the responsibilities. So, both have volunteered to help bring new session ideas into the retreat to strengthen the spiritual focus and enhance the value of the peaceful respite from everyday life.

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Malvern Retreat House Retreatant Profiles



Jacqueline Rosa
Healing and Relief

(Cont'. from page 10) "When I first got there," Jackie said, "I was overwhelmed with life and overwhelmed with all the people at the retreat. I'm not very religious, but when we did adoration, I had a really big moment. It was a huge spiritual awakening and there were signs everywhere." For example, when Jackie went to her room the first night, the cross hanging on the wall in her room was glowing in the dark. Finding this unusual, she asked some other retreatants if their crosses were also glowing. They were not. She had the only glow-in-the dark crucifix, which she found meaningful.

Another sign was in the adoration ceremony itself. Jackie recalls, "I didn't know what I was doing. I was uncomfortable sitting there and I flipped to the page in the prayer book that matched my room number, and it said, 'Give me your burdens, and I will let you rest.' Everything was weighing so heavily on me at that time, just like out of control crazy. And I just cried." Jackie says her spiritual lesson was, "I just have to learn how to turn it over. And then I can take a breather."

Jackie found her experience so valuable that she has become a deputy captain of the retreat, charged with both spreading the word about the value of the experience and contributing ideas to make the retreat better. She wants to make sure there's something at the retreat for all women, no matter their age or how long they've been sober. Jackie says, "When I came back, things started falling into place, my mental health started getting better. It was the pause I needed in my life."



**Cesar and
Martha Quintana**

(Cont'. from page 10) She believes the retreat provides solitude and a beautiful environment perfect for maintaining her faith. "I take a walk there and it gives me relief from whatever may be weighing on me. It's very special for me," says Martha.

Lalo and Martha understand that those who speak Spanish, and have come from places such as Mexico, Ecuador, Honduras, and El Salvador, often have greater life challenges than American-born retreatants. Now living in a very different culture and often having left family behind, these immigrants not only have financial difficulties, but they also are lonely. Therefore, says Martha, "For immigrants, it's very important to keep in touch with God, since He is the only one who can help us to survive." Martha also notes that many female immigrants had been abused by family members and others in their homelands.

Lalo and Martha have one child, 21-year-old daughter Ariana, who is a junior at West Chester University majoring in criminal justice. Ariana has begun to follow in her parents' footsteps, attending Malvern retreat events and making friends there.

Lalo and Martha both volunteer at the Spanish language retreats. They're very interested in extending the Spanish retreat community beyond the retreat itself by regularly communicating with retreatants and becoming a support system of friends. Lalo volunteers because, "People have done this work for me, so I feel that I should do this volunteer work to benefit others." Lalo and Martha want to find new ways to promote the Spanish retreats through local Spanish media.

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"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God."

- St. John Damascene

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***"Do everything in love."
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- Philippians 4:6

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-1 Thessalonians 5:16-18***

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