

A MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF LANSING



Institute for Spiritual Direction

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THOUGHTS FROM FR. DAVID



What became abundantly clear to me at the graduation ceremony of our fifth cohort this past December 15th was the sense of purpose embraced by the graduates, students and alumni as a community united as one. ISD reinforces the reality of a purpose driven life. Our Pilgrim's Way of the Cross moves us toward that which is illuminated by the uncreated light of Christ, that which is otherwise unseen by the world. As St. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:18 *"Fix our eyes not on what is seen but what is unseen [for] ... what is unseen is eternal."* Speaking the truth in love, we grow to become

in every respect the body of Christ who is the head. As we celebrate five years of ministry together, we *"do not run aimlessly"* (1Cor 9:26). But rather we are sustained by the living waters, the Fountain of Life where we live and move and have our being.

From our first cohort that gathered in the Fall of 2016 to this fifth graduating cohort, which passed the torch on to the students of the 6th cohort, we grow stronger in our faith, overcoming the obstacles that challenge us, steadfast in the knowledge that the evil of darkness will not overcome.

In joy, some eighty of us strong gathered to celebrate our fifth anniversary milestone. My prayer is that we be sustained throughout 2022 by the Bread of Life as we continue to celebrate Christ's victory. *"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."* (John 1:5) Astonishingly, Jesus Christ gave us power to become children of God. And that is our profound mission *"to accompany others in their transforming relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church."* (ISD Mission)

Change, Grace and Growth at the ISD

The last few months have been a time of great excitement at ISD and I wanted to fill everybody in on some of the recent happenings. In early September, Fr. David Rosenberg requested that he be moved to senior status as a priest in the Diocese of Lansing. Priests who reach a certain age are allowed to request senior priest status and Bishop Boyea granted this request in early September, with his strong encouragement and support. Senior priests are then able to pursue other projects that will serve the Kingdom of God.

This meant that he was no longer the director of the St. Francis Retreat Center and he was free to put more energy into other projects, including the Institute for Spiritual Direction.

Such a change, even one that is very positive like this one, can create confusion in the short run and some of you may have experienced that. Now, four months later, things are settling down and the blessings of God are evident.

As the ISD moves ahead with greater vision and inspiration than ever, we will be talking about some of these positive changes in the newsletter and on the website. Keep your eyes on the ISD web site to see some of these events in more detail.

For now, here is a short list of some of the blessings we are experiencing:

- The ISD executive council is taking more responsibility for various ongoing areas of concern in the ISD
- A new building has been obtained very near to the retreat house that will be used for ISD offices and meeting rooms.
- Work is underway to allow the ISD curriculum to be accredited. Graduates will be grandfathered in.
- New projects are being developed where the ISD will offer support to parishes in the diocese, with the idea of providing resources for building small communities within the parish.
- We are looking for more facilities that we can use to lessen the heavy impact of ISD on the retreat center. One example of this was the use of St. Jude's parish for the graduation ceremony in December. ISD was generously welcomed to this beautiful facility.

Visit us at: <http://isdministries.org> to see more details as they are developed.



Julie Parsell, Sandra Bernier, Nora Francis, Ermin Gornik, Jessica Kiesling, Barb Swartzel, Tony Sperendi

GRADUATION: WHAT A NIGHT OF JOY!

There is no day that brings greater happiness than graduation day. We celebrated this great event on December 15 at St. Jude Catholic Church in Dewitt. There was a lot to rejoice in this year.

Our intrepid graduates had to make a lot of adjustments throughout their training sessions because they happened to begin classes right at the time that Covid became a major issue. Our grads reacted with resilience and flexibility as they had to make changes on the fly to observe the needed precautions. It took a lot of extra adjusting, but it did not phase our faithful and enthusiastic graduates. They were on a mission and they did not waver.

And what was that mission? We were all reminded as we celebrated the votive Mass of the Holy Spirit and we all remembered one of the most important lessons we learn—the Holy Spirit is the true director and we are His Servants. This puts our ministry in the proper focus and allows God to do His work in the hearts of those who come for direction. And the Holy Spirit is so faithful to doing His work and giving His inspiration.

What else brought us joy? We were celebrating in a lovely Church and everyone enjoyed the honor guard from the Knights of Columbus. Thanks to the Knights for their support of our graduates. And the music ministry was inspiring and uplifting. It added greatly to our joy.

And who can overlook the beautiful meal that was prepared for our grads and all their guests? A great time was had by all. Did I mention that the food was delicious?

Over all these blessings there was the sense of resolution and joy in taking on this service to others who seek to deepen their spiritual life. There is no greater joy than that.

What a great night!



UPCOMING EVENTS

- New semester begins January 11, 2022
- Ignatian Weekend: July 9-11, 2022
- Alumni/New Cohort Day: August 18, 2022

SAINTLY INSPIRATION ST. ROBERT DAMASCENE



In this way you have humbled yourself, Christ my God, so that you might carry me, your stray sheep, on your shoulders. You let me graze in green pastures, refreshing me with the waters of orthodox teaching at the hands of your shepherds. You pastured these shepherds, and now they in turn tend your chosen and special flock. Now you have called me, Lord, by the hand of your bishop to minister to your people. I do not know why you have done so, for you alone know that. Lord, lighten the heavy burden of the sins through which I have seriously transgressed. Purify my mind and heart. Like a shining lamp, lead me along the straight path. When I open my mouth, tell me what I should say. By the fiery tongue of your Spirit make my own tongue ready. Stay with me always and keep me in your sight. Lead me to pastures, Lord, and graze there with me.

submitted by Ermin Gornik, '21

INSIDE THE ISD FAMILY

One comment we often hear is that members of the ISD experience a sense of family with their brothers and sisters at the Institute. This new feature will highlight thoughts from various graduates over the years. Let us rejoice together over all the blessings we have received in our service.

Thoughts from Anne Burr:
“The ISD is more than a school. For me it is a place of hope, joy, charity, mercy. I grew spiritually in so many ways. Classes in scripture and theology were critical in my formation as a Catholic Christian.”

Most importantly, I learned to receive and respond to Jesus immense love for us as sons and daughters of the Father. Receiving that identity, resting in it, allows me to use the tools we were trained in both for my own continual conversion and to lead others to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is surely guiding the institute and its mission, as evidenced by the fruit it is bearing for myself, my classmates and our directees. I am so grateful for this blessing”.



For more information on the Institute for Spiritual Direction, on how to become a spiritual director, or how to find a spiritual director, please visit www.isdministries.org, or email Fr. David Rosenberg at drosenberg@isdministries.org.