Dear friends in the Lord,

Headlines often capture the significant events of the moment. As I write this, the abuse crisis and its legacy rightfully demand our attention. The Holy Father and Father General call the Society of Jesus and the whole Church to attend to this critical situation, caring for those who have experienced abuse and taking steps to ensure the safety of all God’s little ones.

Beneath the headlines, though, the quiet steady work of God in and through the Society of Jesus continues. This magazine highlights that reality and gives us renewed faith that the One who has blessed us with such wonderful men as the Markoe brothers and Fr. Fichter continues to raise up new apostles to serve the Lord.

You will read of the ordination of Fr. Fernando Luis Barreto Mercado, a moving ceremony at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish and a moment of consolation for the Society and the Church as Puerto Rico recovers from Hurricane Maria. You will encounter novices as they faced the challenges of Angola Prison. The long history of our ministries in El Paso, Albuquerque and at Our Lady of the Oaks gives you a glimpse of the rich variety of works that Jesuits and our colleagues perform. You will see the traces of God’s work in the lives of Chris Farrell and John Fava. So much of this lies beneath the surface but testifies to God laboring among us.

Yet, our ministry depends on our lay partners. The extraordinary generosity of time and spirit of Ms. Joan Gaulene highlights that. We know, too, that we rely upon you to help us continue the work done by so many of our predecessors, continued today in so many places. Thank you for your generosity.

Please be assured of our prayers for you and all whom you love. Do pray for us, that we may respond ever more fully to the call of Christ.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

Ronald A. Mercier, SJ
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Cover: As police chaplain, Br. John Fava
provides emotional and spiritual support to officers in St. Louis.
Jesuit Superior General Arturo Sosa announced in July that the Society of Jesus has initiated the process of beatification for former Superior General Pedro Arrupe, SJ.

As required by the Catholic Church, the diocese of Rome approved the opening of the process. It is the first step on the path to canonization, in which the Church formally declares a person a saint. Father Arrupe is already considered a “Servant of God.”

This announcement indicates the Society of Jesus is willing to commit resources to advance Fr. Arrupe’s cause for sainthood. This may include work such as cataloging his letters and gathering testimony from people who knew him.

Father Arrupe was born in 1907 and entered the Jesuits at the age of 20. He was ordained in 1936 and moved to Japan in 1938 to work as a missionary. He was near Hiroshima when the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on the city.

He was elected the 28th superior general in 1965, while the Second Vatican Council was underway. He proceeded to steer the focus of the worldwide Society to include more social justice issues. For instance, he is responsible for the founding of Jesuit Refugee Services, which today provides education to refugees in more than 50 countries.

He served as superior general until 1983 and died Feb. 5, 1991.

Province Responds to Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandal

Referring to letters from Pope Francis and Jesuit Superior General Arturo Sosa, Provincial Ronald A. Mercier called on all Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province to observe a day of prayer and penance in solidarity with the victims of sexual abuse. His call came in the wake of the Pennsylvania grand jury report and the downfall of former-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. He also asked the directors of the various province works to choose a date for a similar observance.

“After discussion with my Consultors, I ask all Jesuit communities to take Saturday, Sept. 15, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, as a day of fasting and prayer,” Fr. Mercier wrote. “The road ahead will involve all of us in responding to this crisis and so it is right that we pray and fast in union with one another, seeking forgiveness of the sins that have been, but also moving us to hunger and thirst for justice in solidarity with victims of abuse and all those who remain vulnerable.”

Father Mercier noted that this day of prayer and penance is just one step in addressing the crisis, but one which will serve to prepare the Church for what lies ahead.

Seven Enter the Novitiate; Six Pronounce First Vows

A Jesuit’s formation begins in the novitiate, where he spends two years learning about the Society of Jesus. This August, seven men entered the Novitiate of St. Stanislaus Kostka in Grand Coteau, La.: Reynaldo Belfort, Timothy Bishop, Travis Crowe, Brent Gordon, Joseph Nolla, Nicholas Reed and Sonny Vo.

The following day, Aug. 11, six second-year novices pronounced First Vows, bringing their own novice experience to an end and sending them forth to begin the next stage of Jesuit training as scholastics. Ángel Flores, Joshua Hinchie, Marco Machado, Jeff Miraflor, Jorge Roque and Connor Smith pronounced perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, committing themselves for life to follow Christ and to participate in his ministry as Jesuits.

Novices spend their time learning about the Society of Jesus, how to pray and live in community and how to serve; in short, a novice learns what it means to be a companion of Jesus in the Church and the world today.

The province invites your prayer for the men in formation any time, but especially in the coming weeks. The first-year novices will experience the Spiritual Exercises as a full 30-day silent retreat throughout the month of November. The second-year novices will be on “experiment” during this time, getting hands-on experience in Jesuit schools.

Peter Gadalla, SJ, (center) was ordained to the diaconate in the Coptic Rite on July 17 in Cairo, Egypt, by His Beatitude, Patriarch Ibrahim Issac Sidrak. He was joined by William Manaker, SJ and Provincial Ronald Mercier, SJ.

Father Andrew Kirschman, SJ, pronounced final vows on Aug. 5 in Grand Coteau, La.

Father Jeffrey Johnson, SJ, pronounced final vows on Aug. 31 at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston.

Father Gregory Waldrop, SJ, pronounced final vows on Sept. 6 at Holy Name of Jesus Church in New Orleans.

Matthew Baugh, SJ and Stephen Kramer, SJ, were ordained to the diaconate on Sept. 15 in Boston.
New领导力

新领导力

St. Matthew’s Parish
St. Louis

St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in St. Louis recently welcomed a new leadership team. Provincial Ronald A. Mercier, SJ, missioned Cheryl Archibald as parish life coordinator and Kevin Cullen, SJ, as pastoral associate on July 29.

Ms. Archibald will run the day-to-day operations of the parish. She has served as pastoral associate at St. Matthew’s for five years.

Father Cullen, who has been in residence at St. Matthew’s for two years, will preside at liturgies and provide the sacraments for which priestly ordination is required.

Former pastor Patrick Quinn, SJ, now serves as mission coordinator for staff outreach at Regis University in Denver.

New to Province Staff

The Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province welcomed Sr. Amy Diesen, OSF, as the new director of Ignatian Volunteer Corps – St. Louis. Sister Diesen, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, began her work with IVC on Aug. 20.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to serve with and for the volunteers, reflectors, agencies and the Jesuit community as we journey deeper into God’s love through our encounters with the poor and one another,” Sr. Diesen said.

Sister Diesen has a master’s degree in pastoral studies from the Aquinas Institute of Theology, and served as pastoral associate at Christ, Prince of Peace Parish in Manchester, Mo., and St. Joseph Parish in Lebanon, Ill.

Upcoming Vocations Events

The vocations staff is hosting several events this fall, including:

Oct. 7: Vocations Meet & Greet, Regis University, Denver

Oct. 14: Jesuit Vocations Night, Rockhurst University, Kansas City, Mo.

Oct. 26–28: Come and See Weekend, Saint Louis University, St. Louis


Any young man who is discerning his call to serve God in the Church as a Jesuit is encouraged to contact Fr. Randy Gibbens for more information: UCSVocationCoordinator@Jesuits.org or 314-896-1534.
The new Jesuit Archives & Research Center (JARC) in St. Louis was formally blessed and dedicated on Aug. 22. Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson, archbishop of St. Louis, blessed the building and made brief remarks to a crowd of about 100 donors, Jesuits, colleagues, staff and friends.

“It is God who inspires in the human spirit the desire to record and preserve through archives and books and other means the discoveries of the human mind that open the way to truth,” Archbishop Carlson said. “It is therefore fitting that your work of conserving archives and books, as a form of spreading divine truth, should have the support of God’s blessing.”

Father Provincial Ronald A. Mercier, SJ, expressed gratitude to the donors who made the new JARC possible, as well as the provincials of the other provinces in the United States who have entrusted their histories to this shared facility. He particularly thanked Dr. David Miros, archivist and JARC director, who oversaw the project from concept to completion.

“This will be a living and dynamic hub, one already being used by scholars from this country and beyond,” Fr. Mercier said. “Its structure is designed to be filled with light, and its purpose is to shed light on our history … always looking for the truth that helps us not only understand our history, but reflect on how we shall shape the future. Who knows what new perspectives will emerge from the work to be done here?”
Province Celebrates Ordination in Puerto Rico

The Jesuits USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province celebrated the ordination to the priesthood of Fernando Luis Barreto Mercado, SJ, on July 28, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Most Reverend Roberto O. González Nieves, OFM, Archbishop of San Juan, presided at the ordination at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, the Jesuit parish in San Juan.

This is the first Jesuit ordination in Puerto Rico since the island became part of the UCS Province in December 2014. Father Barreto Mercado is from Ponce, Puerto Rico, and entered the Society of Jesus when Puerto Rico was an independent region.

Father Barreto Mercado will serve for the next year as parochial vicar at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, where he was ordained and celebrated his first Mass on Sunday, July 29.

After earning bachelor’s degrees in finance and actuarial science in 2001, Barreto Mercado worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Atlanta for one year and for Cigna Healthcare in Hartford, Conn., for three years. He entered the Society of Jesus in Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic in 2004.

He earned a Licentiate in Philosophy from the Pontifical University of Salamanca and a graduate degree in Ignatian spirituality from Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid. He taught computer science and helped with Ignatian formation for new teachers at Colegio San Ignacio, the Jesuit high school in San Juan, and also taught confirmation classes at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish.

He studied Chinese for two years in Taipei, Taiwan, before beginning his theology studies. After a year of theology in Taiwan, Barreto Mercado was missioned to the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley, Calif., earning a Bachelor of Sacred Theology and a Master of Divinity degree in May. While at Berkeley, he served as a deacon in multiple communities.

Fathers W. Penn Dawson, Jason C. LaLonde, Michael J. Wegenka and David C. Paternostro were ordained in St. Louis on June 9.
Los jesuitas de la Provincia USA Central y Meridional (UCS) celebraron la ordenación presbiteral de Fernando Luis Barreto Mercado, SJ, el 28 de julio, en San Juan, Puerto Rico. S.E.R. Mons. Roberto O. González Nieves, OFM, arzobispo metropolitano de San Juan, presidió la ordenación en la parroquia San Ignacio de Loyola en San Juan.

Esta es la primera ordenación jesuita en Puerto Rico desde que la isla se unió con la Provincia UCS en diciembre del 2014. El padre Barreto Mercado es de Ponce, Puerto Rico, y entró en la Compañía de Jesús cuando Puerto Rico era una región independiente.

El padre Barreto Mercado servirá el próximo año como vicario parroquial en la parroquia San Ignacio, donde fue ordenado presbítero y donde celebró su primera misa el domingo, 29 de julio.


Obtuvo una licenciatura en Filosofía en la Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca y un postgrado en Espiritualidad Ignaciana en la Universidad Pontificia de Comillas en Madrid. Enseñó clases de Computadoras y ayudó en la formación ignaciana de nuevos profesores en el colegio San Ignacio, la escuela secundaria jesuita en San Juan, y enseñó también clases de Confirmación en la parroquia San Ignacio.

Estudió chino mandarín por dos años en Taipéi, Taiwán, antes de empezar sus estudios teológicos. Después de un año de teología en Taiwán, Barreto Mercado fue enviado a la Jesuit School of Theology de Santa Clara University en Berkeley, California, completando un bachiller en Teología Sagrada y una maestría en Divinidad en mayo. Mientras en Berkeley, sirvió como diácono en múltiples comunidades.

Los padres W. Penn Dawson, Jason C. LaLonde, Michael J. Wegenka y David C. Paternostro fueron ordenados en San Luis el 9 de junio.
In the beginning, the Society of Jesus was made up of pilgrims and preachers and priests. They had mystics and missionaries … but not a carpenter or cook among them. The original Companions were men of many talents who sought to bring souls closer to God, but they were unprepared to make their own meals or clothing, let alone build schools. And so, just six years after the founding of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius Loyola petitioned the pope to allow the admission of lay co-adjutors – or helpers – known more commonly as brothers. His request was approved, and brothers began to build the Society.

Although St. Ignatius founded a ‘priestly order,’ it became immediately apparent that if the priests were to do their ministry … ‘coadjutors’ or assistants were needed to build and maintain the institutions, as well as to provide for the necessities of daily living.” (Jerome Neyrey, SJ, in Indispensable Companions: Jesuit Brothers of the South from Colonial Times to the Present)

Saint Ignatius outlined in the General Examen that brothers would help with “necessary exterior matters,” generally understood as the more hands-on tasks. But Ignatius also noted that brothers “may be employed in more important matters in accordance with the talent God gave them.” (The Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus, in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus)

“They came with considerable craft,” Fr. Neyrey said. Many, in fact, were true artisans, including architects and artists whose work has stood the test of time. But others entered with limited training, and the Constitutions forbade brothers seeking additional education, a rule adhered to (more or less) until later pronouncements from General Congregations. Today the educational requirements for a Jesuit brother are similar to those of a Jesuit priest.

"The apostolic importance of the Jesuit Brother, since our communities are essentially apostolic, derives from the fact that all the members of the community give to the community everything they have and are.”

Superior General Pedro Arrupe on Oct. 31, 1978, the feast day of St. Alphonsus Rodríguez
Post-Suppression Laborers to Today’s Renaissance Men

Following the restoration of the Society in 1814, the role of the Jesuit brothers devolved into one of more menial tasks, and a sense of class began to emerge within the Society and within Jesuit communities. The brothers attended to the physical, earthly needs of the community. They served as cooks, gardeners, tailors and infirmarians. As needs evolved, brothers became mechanics, plumbers and electricians. Well into the 20th century, the work of the Jesuit brother was hidden: while priests were public figures, brothers quietly did what was needed for priests to do their sacramental work.

The role of the brother began to change significantly – when else? – in the 1960s. The Society’s 31st General Congregation, convened in 1965, attempted to eliminate social distinctions between brothers and priests in community life by affirming that brothers “have a full share” in “one and the same” apostolic vocation with priests.

Five years later, the World Congress of Brothers proclaimed, “[H]ence there are no second-class Jesuits, but only companions in Jesus in one same apostolic work.”

Jesuit brothers today can still be found caring for sick Jesuits … or ailing boilers. But they also serve as high school teachers, campus ministers and researchers. Perhaps the best-known Jesuit brother today is Guy Consolmagno, SJ, of the Maryland Province, who serves as director of the Vatican Observatory. Working with him is Br. Robert Macke of the USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province. Brother Macke may be one of the world’s foremost scholars on meteorites.

Brother Lawrence Huck, SJ, also has a somewhat unusual role for Jesuit brothers. He was recently missioned as the Socius, or companion, to the novice director. He is the first Jesuit brother to serve in that position for the UCS province, a role of real significance in the life of any religious organization. He has also served as president of Good Shepherd Nativity School in New Orleans and taught and served in campus ministry at the Jesuit high schools in Tampa and New Orleans. As a master electrician, he also has the skill required to oversee the complete renovation of St. Charles College, the Jesuit community in Grand Coteau, La., as he did from 2010 to 2013.

Brother Huck sees the role of the brother as “the servant of the servants. Brothers are humble. They are generous. There is an earthiness that people are attracted to because they see Christ in that … Everyone needs a brother to talk with sometimes.”

Brothers are occasionally referred to as “lay religious.” They live in religious communities and they profess vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, but they are not ordained priests, nor are they preparing for ordination. Instead, the brotherhood is a vocation of its own, one that for many is just the right fit.

“Brothers can do anything and everything a priest can do, except sacramental ministry,” said Br. John Fava, who serves as a police chaplain in St. Louis. “I just think the opportunities for brothers are limitless.”

“We might think of brothers as exercising a priestly ministry—not only as members who support a corporate sacerdotal mission, but precisely in the way that they themselves, as individual brothers, bring Christ to the world and the world to Christ,” Br. William Rehg, SJ, wrote in Value and Viability of a Jesuit Brother’s Vocation (Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits, Winter 2008).
“The Jesuit brother, in other words, witnesses to the value of the Jesuit vocation precisely as a religious vocation, apart from any position one might have as a priest in the ministerial hierarchy.”

Brother Rehg first became interested in “some kind of religious or missionary life” while still in grade school. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1976 on the “priesthood track,” but requested a change in his grade to that of brother in 1988.

“I really love being a Jesuit, but I was not attracted to the priesthood,” he said. Instead he was struck by the spirit of the brothers he saw in his community. “The vocation just fit.”

After changing grades, he entered a doctoral program at Northwestern University. “At the time, it was still kind of unusual for a brother to get a Ph.D.,” he said. “You did not see a lot of brothers working in higher education.” He has taught philosophy at Saint Louis University since 1992 and currently serves as dean of the College of Philosophy and Letters, the department in which Jesuit scholastics study.

The Jesuit Brothers Committee of Canada and the United States plays an important role in the changing perceptions of the vocation to the brotherhood. It first began in 1978, lasting only a year before being reinstituted at the request of the U.S. provincials in 1980 to represent Jesuit brothers and promote the vocation. Two members of the UCS Province are active on the committee: Br. Huck and Br. Fava.

Brother Fava entered the Society of Jesus because he wanted to teach and was attracted to Jesuit life. He first considered becoming a brother while in the novitiate, but it was while he was teaching that the idea really took hold.

“How can I better serve the students? Do I need to be a priest to do this?” he asked himself. He determined that freedom from sacramental duties would allow more time and energy for his students; there is no doubt in his mind that he made the right decision. In another decision aimed at service to others, he later became a permanent deacon, enabling him to preside at weddings, baptisms and funerals.

“I felt that God, the Society and God’s people were calling me to the permanent diaconate, to serve them,” Fava said. “I answered that call. I’m serving any way I can, and I enjoy doing it. I’m doing what I was called to do.”

Brother Glenn Kerfoot met the Jesuits at Regis College (now University), where a Jesuit priest accompanied him through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and baptized him. He began to consider life as a Jesuit.

“When I think of my vocation story, I don’t consider it a ‘call,’ I consider it an invitation,”

“I felt that God, the Society and God’s people were calling me to the permanent diaconate, to serve them. I answered that call. I’m serving any way I can, and I enjoy doing it. I’m doing what I was called to do.”

– Brother John Fava
Br. Kerfoot says, “God sent an invitation, and it was up to me to reply.” He entered in 1986. 

Having grown up as a non-Catholic Christian, he was drawn to community life, to preaching, and to the study and sharing of Scripture, but not to the priesthood. “The priesthood never resonated with me,” he said. “I never felt like I had an invitation to the priesthood. I am called to be a Jesuit, but not to be a priest.”

With a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and a master’s in theology, Br. Kerfoot served in campus ministry at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Mo., for ten years and taught at St. John’s College in Belize City, Belize, for another ten. He currently serves as the minister of Xavier Jesuit Center in Denver. 

Like Br. Rehg, Br. Kerfoot petitioned to change grades to become a brother. At the time, this was not uncommon: men drawn to the Society began the journey to priestly ordination only to discover their “invitation” to another vocation.

In the early years of the Society, as many as 25 percent of Jesuits were brothers. Today there are fewer than 100 brothers in the United States, less than 5% of the total number of Jesuits. The UCS Province is home to 20 brothers. As with all brothers, they serve in a wide range of assignments, some scholarly, some ministerial, some hands-on.

The decline in the number of Jesuit brothers is a concern to some. As far back as 1978, Superior General Pedro Arrupe maintained that the brothers’ contribution, “both to community life and that of the apostolate, is irreplaceable … the extinction of this grade of Brothers would be a great loss, a mutilation with grave consequences for the body of the Society and for its apostolate.”

Fortunately, men still hear the invitation to serve as a Jesuit brother. The men entering the Society of Jesus in recent years are intentional in their vocation; they choose the brotherhood because of the “fit,” not because of obstacles such as age or limited education.

“We are all part of the priestly charism of the Society. Brothers share in that. So, the question is, how do we help others encounter God?” Br. Kerfoot says. “Today the vocation of brother is as broad as the Society of Jesus. We go where the needs are.”

“Ignatius thought obedience was the vow we should be best at,” Br. Rehg said. “To be a Jesuit is to be a person whose vocation is marked by obedience, an openness to being missioned. The Jesuit brother serves wherever and however he is needed.”

Yesterday, today and tomorrow: Jesuit brothers go wherever they are needed and do whatever needs to be done.

Father Jerome Neyrey’s book Indispensable Companions: Jesuit Brothers of the South from Colonial Times to the Present can be ordered through Amazon.
Life in the novitiate is a two-year stretching of the heart to allow each novice to hear where Jesus is calling him to serve. Some of this stretching happens in the classroom, but much of the “heart work” happens when the novices open themselves to encountering others, especially those on the margins.

Each spring, second-year novices participate in an immersive teaching workshop aimed at introducing them to the theories and realities of Catholic social teaching; the three-week seminar happens both inside and outside the classroom. If the novitiate is the “school of the heart,” then this Catholic social teaching workshop is a central part of its field work. Among many places, the Louisiana State Penitentiary becomes an unlikely classroom to probe questions of faith, community and vocation.

“We began including a retreat at the prison to give the novices an experience of being ‘evangelized by the poor,’” said Mary Baudouin, provincial assistant for social ministries. “The novices get to see and hear firsthand the faith and strength of the poorest of the poor – those who are locked away for life, many of whom have no family and will never experience freedom, yet who have such strong faith and desire to serve.”

The penitentiary is an 18,000-acre, maximum-security facility often referred to as simply “Angola,” because of its origins as plantation land, once worked by enslaved people reportedly brought from Angola, Africa. The novices spent their day there with Catholic Chaplain Gerald P. “Jay” Jackson, hearing stories of life on the inside from the men who experience it.

“Just like Mother Teresa said, ‘I want to feed the poorest of the poor;’ I want to help the worst of the worst. Because that’s who Jesus came for,” one inmate told the novices. “Please help the worst of the worst.” This plea aligns with the Jesuit mission to serve the greatest need, a call the novices clearly hear.

The segregated communities inside Angola house more than 6,000 men in a series of “camps” that are far enough apart that visitors must drive between them.

Most inmates, approximately 85 percent, are serving life sentences. There is a significant need for spiritual care attuned to the unique challenges of life without parole.

Chaplain Jackson plans ministry, classes, spiritual direction and Catholic Masses at each of the camps. He coordinates funerals for men who die in prison, including contacting family members and next of kin. “Three to four years is about
how long visitors last, then friends and family move on,” Jackson says. “Because of the isolation, it’s sometimes hard to find next of kin or a friend who visited within the last 15 years to notify of the death.”

Many men find solace in the vibrant religious communities they create at Angola. One particularly strong community is a group of Catholic Peer Ministers. These men take graduate-level courses in theology to be able to minister to fellow inmates. Together, the novices and ministers attended Mass celebrated by Fr. Bryan Garry, SJ, shared a meal and heard personal testimonies.

One man said to the novices, “I’m a devout Catholic and this is my family, so welcome to my family. Without the Church I would be stripped and robbed of my humanity.” Others spoke of the importance of prayer to the health and faith of individuals and the community: “We unify ourselves by showing that prayer is active.”

Many of the Catholic Peer Ministers thanked the novices, not only for visiting that day, but also for dedicating their lives to the church: “As novices, you’re taking an important step, and it’s a brave step. You’re stepping out and saying, ‘I’m a Christian.’ Thank you.”

The Catholic Peer Ministers is one group whose call to serve is strong. Another vocation the Jesuit novices witnessed is the role of men who work in hospice. Seated in one of the many Catholic chapels, decorated with inmate-made art, Mike and Mark related their experiences ministering to dying men.

Hospice volunteers accompany dying men from the moment a man arrives on the ward, through his last breath, into the morgue, and through the funeral and burial. They also dig graves for those men who have died inside Angola. “The Process,” as it’s called at the prison, is entirely internal; inmates even construct the wooden caskets.

Volunteering on hospice is considered a testament to an inmate’s character and work ethic, and it is both emotionally and physically demanding. Mike has worked for 25 years at the treatment center, and said, “It has been really hard, especially when I was really tight with a guy. I wasn’t expecting to see death, to accept death. But this is the whole nine yards.”

Mike told the novices some people question how his heart has not hardened to all the sadness his role entails. He said he actually feels equipped with God-given gifts: “It affects me every time. It doesn’t mean I don’t have a heart; it’s just what God has prepared me to do.”

Jackson guided the novices around various sites in the prison: St. Augustine Chapel, the Catholic mainstay in the heart of the prison; Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel, whose walls are adorned with inmate-painted murals; the execution chamber. All capital punishments in Louisiana are carried out at Angola.

As he does with every group, Jackson invited the novices to pray the Our Father with him, each with a hand placed on the gurney used when the death penalty is carried out. In a powerful call to reconciliation, Jackson encouraged the novices to remember this gesture when praying the Our Father in the future, particularly the words, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

Novices are encouraged to take the experiences, readings and questions they have to prayer. “Our hearts are broken encountering the painful reality of injustice. It can lead to despair if you don’t have prayer and hope,” Connor Smith, SJ, said.

The second-year novices bring their experience at Angola forward with them, knowing they are supported. The novices find solace in processing their experiences and questions with Jesuit community members.

As Jorge Roque, SJ, said, “The wider Jesuit community is full of examples of how to live, how to work in the social apostolate. We see their dedication, passion and weakness, too, and it motivates us.”
The Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province is blessed by the presence of men of faith, drawn by the spirit of St. Ignatius Loyola, to serve as contemplatives in action. This year, three such men celebrate 50 years as Companions in the Society of Jesus. We are grateful to the Lord for calling these men, and we thank them for their generous response to this call.

This year also marks the milestone anniversaries of 33 other members celebrating 25, 50, 60, 70 or 75 years from entrance or ordination. You can read their reflections on our website.

Please join us in praying for these good men.

**Brother John Fava, SJ**

As chaplain for the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, Br. John Fava, SJ, has for many years offered spiritual and personal guidance to police officers and their families. He is also assistant to the minister at the Jesuit Hall Community on the campus of Saint Louis University.

In addition to his hometown of St. Louis, Br. Fava has served in Aurora, Colo., and Belize City, Belize. He taught Spanish at Regis Jesuit High School, Aurora, for 20 years. He has also taught Spanish at St. Louis University High School and St. John’s College, Belize City.

Brother Fava entered the Jesuits in Florissant, Mo., in 1968 and pronounced first vows two years later. In December 1984, he entered the diaconate and pronounced final vows on Oct. 31, 1980.

He also served as the minister and bookkeeper at Xavier Jesuit Center in Denver and as a minister at White House Jesuit Retreat Center in St. Louis from 2002 to 2016.

Brother Fava earned a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy and a master’s in Spanish from Saint Louis University. He completed the Permanent Diaconate Program at St. Thomas Seminary in Denver. A more complete profile is available on page 29 of this magazine.
Father Edwin Gros, SJ

Father Edwin “Eddie” Gros, SJ, begins a brief sabbatical this year after five years as pastor at Holy Name of Jesus Jesuit Parish on the campus of Loyola University New Orleans.

Born in New Orleans, Fr. Gros has served a good

part of his priestly ministry in his hometown, including a brief term as interim pastor at Holy Name in 2006. He also served as a teacher and chaplain at Jesuit High School, 1981-85, and as an associate campus minister at Loyola University New Orleans, 1992-95. He was also the superior of the Jesuit House of Studies from 1991 to 1995. From 2002 to 2006, he was dean of University Ministry at Loyola University New Orleans.

Earlier, he taught for two years at Jesuit College Preparatory School in Dallas, 1974-76. He served in Asunción, Paraguay, from 1986 to 1991, where he worked with young Jesuits in formation and taught at the local Jesuit high school. He served as pastor and superior at Sacred Heart Jesuit Community in El Paso, Texas, 2007-13.

Father Gros entered the Society of Jesus in 1968 at St. Charles College, in Grand Coteau, La. He pronounced first vows two years later and was ordained a priest June 21, 1980, at Jesuit High School, New Orleans. He says he is guided by the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero: “A priest must be the voice for the voiceless in our world.”

Father Gros received his Bachelor of Arts in French and philosophy from Loyola University New Orleans. He has also earned two master’s degrees: in theology from the Jesuit School of Theology, Chicago, and in Christian spirituality from Creighton University, Omaha, Neb. Additionally, he studied at the Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico, 2007.

Father Simon J. Hendry, SJ

During his 50 years in the Society of Jesus, Fr. Simon J. “Si” Hendry, SJ, has worked in nearly every kind of ministry, including secondary education, higher education, spiritual and social justice ministries and administration. He currently serves as the director of the Catholic Studies Program and a teacher of religious studies and philosophy at the University of Detroit Mercy in Detroit.

A native of Manasquan, N.J., he grew up in Dunedin, Fla., and attended Jesuit High School in Tampa, Fla. He entered the former New Orleans Province in 1968 at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, La., and pronounced first vows two years later. He was ordained a priest June 11, 1980.

He taught and coached at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston, 1971-74 and again 1982-85, when he also served as acting rector of the Jesuit community. He also served as a teacher, coach and director of community service at Jesuit High School, Tampa, 1978-82. He directed the Jesuit Volunteer Corps South in Houston, 1985-91. At Loyola University New Orleans, he worked as director of the Jesuit Center, 2002-06. He served as superior of the Jesuit Community at the University of Detroit Mercy, 2010-16, in addition to teaching during that time.

Father Hendry earned a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from Spring Hill College, Mobile, Ala. After studying physical chemistry at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich., and philosophy at Loyola University New Orleans, he earned a Master of Divinity in theology from the Jesuit School of Theology, Chicago. In 2002, he completed a doctorate in theology and sociology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif.

He says the ministries he has most enjoyed, such as working with Jesuit Volunteers and teaching students, are those that put him in touch with people at crucial times in their lives as they struggle to make sense out of new experiences, new consciousness and new ideas. His major interest, among many, is the integration of spirituality and social justice.
The history of Jesuits in the USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province is intertwined with the history of America, including the challenges of race relations. The province is currently researching its history of participation in slavery and cannot deny this shameful past. However, there are other Jesuits in the province’s history to which province members can look with pride, who worked to counteract slavery’s enduring effects.

The province’s history with slavery creates a moral obligation to promote justice and minister to and advocate for African-American brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesuits who worked for racial justice may be seen as models for the future.

Making a Stand in St. Louis

The end of legal slavery in the United States did not bring about authentic freedom of black people, but rather, the institution of slavery morphed into other practices, particularly in former slave states. In St. Louis, racism was endemic for generations. By the early 20th Century, the growing African-American population in the St. Louis area was repressed and targeted for violence. The East St. Louis massacres of May and July 1917, which included the murder of an estimated 100 innocent black people at the hands of white mobs and the pillaging and burning of their homes, are evidence of the brutal violence against African Americans during this time.

A month after the massacres, a notable commitment was made by two young St. Louis Jesuits who became influential forces for racial justice in the city and beyond. On Aug. 15, 1917, Fathers John and William Markoe and two fellow Jesuits made the following resolution:

“O, Jesus, we, the undersigned, resolve and determine, in honor of Thy Sacred Heart, Thy Holy Mother, our Guardian Angels and all our Patron Saints, especially Saint Ignatius and Saint Peter Claver, to give and dedicate our whole lives and all our energies, as far as we are able, and it is not contrary to a pure spirit of pure indifference and obedience, for the work of the salvation of the Negroes in the United States; and though altogether unworthy, we trust in the Sacred Hearts, O Jesus and Mary, to obtain for us the priceless favor of doing so. And do thou, O St. Peter Claver, pray for us. Amen. Also, daily to repeat this resolution, for the fulfillment of our expectations and desires.”
Through the early part of the 20th century, the Markoe brothers and other Jesuits decried racism boldly and used their position as religious leaders to work to dismantle racist structures, even in the face of opposition.

In a newspaper interview, Fr. John Markoe scoffed at surveys about discrimination. In his opinion, “That’s like surveying the Missouri River to see if it’s wet.” He believed, “Racism is evil because it’s a heresy. It denies the teachings of Christ and the Church; it’s against the natural law; it’s against decency. And it makes people suffer. It brings humiliation, poverty, misery. There’s no excuse for it. It’s so evil, it’s rotten.”

Father Markoe’s bold proclamations and activism discomfited many, and he was exiled from St. Louis to Omaha, Neb., in 1946. He continued his work for racial justice in that city, making a mark on its civil rights movement.

Even in the late ’70s, Fr. John Markoe maintained a sense of urgency, still outraged at ongoing injustices. He saw his role in the work for racial justice as a true vocation and an honorable mission, saying, “Don’t thank me for anything. Thank God for whatever I have done.”

Integrating Institutions

The possibility of interracial institutions remained highly contentious in the first half of the 20th century, but Catholic schools, particularly in St. Louis and New Orleans, were fulcrum points for desegregation.

The Markoes’ account of the highly publicized integration of Saint Louis University (SLU) begins with a young black woman named Ethel Mattie Williams. Mrs. Williams wanted her daughter Ethel, who had excelled in Catholic schools all her life, to study at a religious college in St. Louis, all of which were segregated at the time. The Williams women called upon Fr. John Markoe for help in 1943 and thus a “final and successful effort to integrate the student body of St. Louis University was underway.”

Father John Markoe responded to the Williams’ call for help by first consulting the president of the University, Patrick Holloran, SJ, and several members of the faculty. Although opposed to integration on the basis that it could scare off white students and benefactors, Fr. Holloran agreed to call a formal meeting of regents and deans to discuss the matter. The meeting was twice delayed, and while Fr. Holloran sent a questionnaire to alumni, Fr. Markoe took action.

Father Markoe turned the questionnaire over to the city editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. The St. Louis Globe Democrat and the St. Louis Star also printed a version of the letter, and this helped to thrust the university’s integration question into the consciousness of the entire city.

Father Markoe distributed a different letter to SLU’s president and influential members of the faculty: copies of “An Open Letter to Mother Edwarda,” a powerful epistle by Ted Le Berthon that appeared in the Pittsburgh Courier on Feb. 5, 1944. The letter to Reverend Mother Edwarda, the superior general of the Sisters of Loretto, tells the story of Mary Aloyse Foster who, because of her race, was denied admission to Webster College, operated by the Sisters of Loretto in the St. Louis suburb of Webster Groves, Mo.

Even with public pressure mounting, the meeting of SLU faculty was inconclusive. During this time, a copy of “An Open Letter” came into the hands of another Jesuit, Claude Heithaus, SJ. “It struck him between the eyes with such force that, although he had never given thought to the racial problem before, he then and there decided to...
make this problem the topic of a sermon he was scheduled to preach shortly after the no-decision faculty meeting took place.”

Father Heithaus delivered his sermon condemning racial discrimination and hatred during a Friday morning Mass at St. Francis Xavier College Church on Feb. 11, 1944. Firmly rooting his sermon in Jesuit spirituality, Fr. Heithaus spoke of uniting the struggle of black men and women to the struggle of Christ and invited students to join him in hearing this call.

While Fr. Holloran attempted to discredit Fr. Heithaus in the press, the sermon elicited tremendous support from the students who heard it. Soon after, the St. Louis Globe Democrat reported that five black students had registered at the university. Two male undergraduates enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, and two men and one woman registered for graduate studies. University records indicate Sylvester Smith and Fredda Witherspoon, two prominent civil rights leaders, began classes in summer 1944. Smith, along with Everett Walker and Nathaniel Watlington, were among the first African-American students to graduate, in 1947.

Integration in the South

In 1947, Joseph Henry Fichter, SJ, arrived at Loyola University New Orleans ready to challenge the racism of Catholic New Orleans. Though he underestimated the resistance he would face, he was responsible for several interracial initiatives involving New Orleans colleges and universities.

In 1949, Harry Alexander, an alumnus of the nearby Xavier University – an historically black, non-Jesuit Catholic college – made the first serious attempt at desegregating Loyola University New Orleans School of Law. He was denied admission, but the struggle for integration at the Jesuit university had begun.

Though Loyola had admitted black students to select programs in 1950, it required the backing of Jesuit Fr. Louis J. Twomey for black students Norman Francis and Benjamin Johnson to enroll at Loyola University School of Law in the fall of 1952. Francis went on to serve 47 years as the first black, lay president of Xavier University from 1968 to 2015, and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2006.

According to R. Bentley Anderson, SJ, Fr. Fichter, more than any other Jesuit of the New Orleans Province, forced the Society of Jesus to examine its race policy.

At Spring Hill College in Mobile, Ala., Patrick Donnelly, SJ, who served as president of the college from 1946 to 1952, had urged the school board to accept black students. He was succeeded by Andrew Smith, SJ, who officially, but quietly, desegregated the school. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” of April 16, 1963, praised “the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.”

The decision to integrate southern Jesuit schools and the province itself came after about 50 members of the former New Orleans Province met Aug. 28, 1952, to create a policy statement rejecting segregation, issued Sept. 9, 1954.

As Fr. Anderson, notes in Black, White, and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956, “this document would be used by the archbishop of New Orleans, Joseph Francis Rummel, to produce his own statement regarding segregation in 1956.”

Once again, the actions of Jesuits working for racial justice within their provinces reverberated and affected change beyond the Society.

The Social Apostolate for Civil Rights

While much of Jesuits’ work for racial justice within the province took the form of the integration of schools, Jesuit social ministries also affected change.

One early voice was Anthony Joseph Achée, SJ, who addressed racial discrimination through radio programs in Lafayette, La., and Mobile, Ala. On the feast of St. Peter Claver in 1949, Fr. Achée broadcast, “We do not have slaves among us anymore, but we do have the descendants of slaves, who in many places and in many respects are subject to contempt and ridicule and labor under great difficulties, and are looked upon as second-class citizens, and are discriminated against for no other reason than their race.”

Through teaching, advocacy and writing, Albert Foley, SJ, combatted institutional racism and sought to dismantle the culture of white supremacy in the Mobile community. He wrote two ordinances for Mobile in 1956 to ban police membership in the Ku Klux Klan and “intimidation by exhibit,” referring to the practice of cross burning. It is also said he offered class credit for recording the license plate numbers of cars parked at Klan rallies.

Retaliating against Fr. Foley’s efforts to obstruct them, in January 1957, the Klan attempted to gain access to Spring Hill’s campus and burn a cross. Students, up late studying for finals, heard the commotion and chased the Klan members away. The white supremacists returned the
next night, this time outside the campus gates. Fr. Foley, away at the time of these events, continued teaching and leading workshops on social justice at Spring Hill until his death in 1990. The Albert S. Foley, S.J., Community Service Center keeps Foley’s legacy of action for justice alive today.

Father Louis Twomey began publishing *Christ’s Blueprint for the South*, a monthly mimeograph, in November 1948. *Blueprint* was intended for a Jesuit audience only, because, as Twomey made clear, “in our ‘intra-family’ efforts we enjoy greater freedom to analyse [sic] our Jesuit social deficiencies, to criticize constructively our failures adequately to respond to the needs of our times.”

Father Twomey clearly recognized that the work for racial justice begins with an examination of self. His humble, contemplative approach may have prompted Jesuit Superior General Pedro Arrupe to ask him to draft a letter, *The Interracial Apostolate: The Society of Jesus and Social Discrimination*, published Nov. 1, 1967. This was a pivotal document, not only for the former New Orleans Province, but also for the Society of Jesus in the United States.

A few months after *The Interracial Apostolate* was published, Fr. Twomey was appointed director of the Interracial Apostolate in the former New Orleans Province. His appointment demonstrated a commitment to the continued work of racial justice within the New Orleans Province, especially in response to the violence during those years.

**Looking Forward: Jesuits Working for Racial Justice**

Jesuits remain active in their commitment to responding to the call for racial justice. Fred Kammer, SJ, director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI), still has his copy of the original “Interracial Apostolate” letter in his office. JSRI, a collaborative effort of the UCS Province and Loyola University New Orleans, follows in Fr. Twomey’s footsteps as an organization committed to applying Catholic social teachings in working for racial and economic justice.

Thomas Clark, SJ, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Baton Rouge, La., said, “As a white pastor of an historically black Catholic parish, I am led to enter into an *examen*, that distinctly Ignatian review of one’s life and world under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to seek clarity about the consolations and desolations we encounter as we serve the Lord and his people.” For Fr. Clark and many Jesuits, these encounters are opportunities to “enter into a deeper understanding of the mystery of evil and seek hope in the transforming power of the merciful gaze of God.”

These Jesuit responses to the call for justice serve as reminders of the complex history of race within the USA Central and Southern Province. They are also a challenge to carry on the legacies of these men, who heard the call for racial justice and willingly and fervently aligned themselves with those in greatest need.
The first Jesuits in North America came as missionaries, dedicated to the single-minded goal of bringing souls to God, often the first to bring Christianity to an area. Like their Jesuit forebears, they unavoidably became “founders,” building schools, parishes and retreat centers to serve the people of God. In so doing, they also played foundational roles in the development of the cities of Albuquerque, N.M., El Paso, Texas and Grand Coteau, La., among others. Three institutions in the southern part of the USA Central and Southern Province are celebrating milestone anniversaries, a testament to God’s enduring kindness. The Jesuit presence filled a need then as it continues to do today.

150 Years of Jesuit Presence in Albuquerque

The Society of Jesus has deep, historical roots in New Mexico and, especially, in the city of Albuquerque. Jesuits have been present in the area since 1868, when Bishop Jean Baptiste Lamy assigned five Italian Jesuits to a budding mission in New Mexico.

Jesuits arrived in “Old Town” Albuquerque in 1868, where they established San Felipe Parish. Fifteen years later, the need arose for a church in “New Town” Albuquerque. At the corner of Sixth St. and Copper Ave., Immaculate Conception Parish emerged and today continues its now 135-year-old mission as a Jesuit parish community.

The Immaculate Conception Parish community and the Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province this year celebrate 150 years of the Jesuits in Albuquerque.

Father Warren Broussard, SJ, pastor of Immaculate Conception, noted the diverse population from which the parish draws today: “We are a downtown parish with a very mixed community; people come from all over to attend Mass.”

This wealth of diversity is at the heart of the parish’s mission and identity. In a formative gesture, the congregation recites the parish mission statement at every liturgy along with the Creed. “It keeps the mission
in people's minds. Lots of parishes have mission statements that go in a book and never get looked at again,” Fr. Broussard said. This recitation reminds parishioners of the parish's identity as a diverse, Jesuit community, committed to justice issues.

Immaculate Conception Parish does more than recite its mission at each liturgy; it also lives it, inside and outside the church.

“Our main focus is trying to be a very welcoming place,” said Fr. Broussard. “Sometimes you go into Catholic churches and you feel like a stranger. You might be familiar with the physical or sacramental elements, but you don’t feel any warmth from the people.”

The parish community is deeply rooted in the city, and as the main parish within Albuquerque, Fr. Broussard noted, many of the city’s civic leaders are graduates of the adjoining St. Mary’s School.

In addition to making the church a hospitable place, another active ministry is the weekly meal that volunteers prepare and serve every Sunday afternoon for the homeless population. This ministry serves between 80 and 150 people every week, restaurant-style. “They take a seat, are served a meal and seconds, as much as they want,” Fr. Broussard said. “We send them off with a lunch bag and try to give them a little dignity in their experience of being served. It’s a nice celebration.”

The parish congregation embodies the mission through their work with interfaith justice groups, rallies and discussions, ministry at a juvenile detention center, outreach for single mothers, and Casa de las Comunidades, a direct service to immigrants in need of assistance.

This anniversary year, parishioners celebrate their diversity and the variety of ways the parish community lives its mission, ready to move boldly into the future. In an executive order, Timothy Keller, Mayor of Albuquerque, declared September 22, 2018, as “Jesuit Foundation Day,” as the parish continues “to enrich and expand their service to the downtown community” and “celebrate 150 years of serving the Albuquerque Community and seeking God in all things.”

With a Jubilee Celebration on Saturday, Sept. 22, Immaculate Conception Parish commemorated 150 years of rich history. Looking to the future, Fr. Broussard said, “We’ve worked to make this a very welcoming parish, and it’s my hope that the community will continue to welcome the stranger, and that people feel accepted the first time they come here.”
125 Years of Jesuits in El Paso

The oldest parish in El Paso, Texas, Parroquia Sagrado Corazón (Sacred Heart Parish) is situated just a few blocks from the U.S.-Mexico border. Parishioners come from all over El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to attend Mass, serve and continue their education.

In the heart of El Paso’s Segundo Barrio neighborhood, the parish functions as a sanctuary where both Spanish- and English-speaking Catholics practice their faith and open their arms to the broader city. Over the past year, Sacred Heart has celebrated 125 years as a Jesuit parish.

The Jesuits have operated the parish since its foundation in 1892. The original building was a gift to the Diocese of El Paso by Fr. Carlos Pinto, SJ, who is often called the “Apostle of El Paso” and under whose leadership the Jesuits built 14 churches and seven schools between 1892 and 1917.

The current structure, which replaced the original church in 1929, holds 2,000 worshippers, and was designed to accommodate refugees who fled religious persecution in Mexico. This legacy lives on in Sacred Heart’s mission today: “We are a border community with roots both in Mexico and in El Paso’s ‘Segundo Barrio.’ Our community is mostly made up of immigrants who have a host of needs and challenges which are directly related to their being uprooted.”

Sacred Heart is a haven for migrants and Catholics and endeavors to counter the effects of poverty and violence on the population.

Directly addressing the specific needs of a border community of migrants, the parish is also home to several other initiatives that serve the broader population. A food bank adjoins the parish office, a multipurpose gym, and a former school which serves as a pastoral and social center.

At its Centro Pastoral, Sacred Heart provides an extensive Adult Education Program that each week includes 46 hours of educational opportunities at various levels for more than 500 adults a year. Courses include basic education classes for adults, General Equivalency Diploma courses, English as a Second Language support, computer literacy and citizenship training.

In addition to the education center of the parish, La Tilma Mexican Restaurant and Catering is an affordable, on-site catering service and restaurant which serves the parish community and beyond. It provides employment and training experience to those who work there, as well as food service to more than 12,000 people every year. Located in the parish center behind the church, La Tilma is a staple at educational events, parish festivals, ventas (flea markets) and health screenings.

Sacred Heart’s bell tower can be seen by people crossing the Rio Grande on the foot bridge from Ciudad Juárez to El Paso, many of whom make the trip across the border every day. A beacon for community members, Sacred Heart’s “ultimate goal is the formation and education of the whole human person: body, mind and spirit,” in true cura personalis of the migrant and the refugee.

Among these are a center for at-risk youth, employment office and a thrift store. (At 99, Fr. Rahm continues his service, now in Brazil.)

Jesuit Fr. Rick Thomas directed Our Lady’s Youth Center (now the Lord’s Ranch) from 1964 to 2006. Under his direction, the center expanded its social and health service ministries beyond El Paso into Ciudad Juárez. (For more on Fr. Thomas and the ministry he built, visit www.thelordsranchcommunity.com/).

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As early as 1876, Jesuits were giving preached retreats to laymen and high school students at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, La. By 1910, The Laymen’s Retreat League of Louisiana, with the strong support of Archbishop James Blenk of New Orleans, were organizing retreats for around 70 men annually. However, as the number of young Jesuits studying at St. Charles College grew, there was no longer enough space for the retreatants at this location. The solution, of course, was to establish a house just for retreats.

Our Lady of the Oaks Jesuit Retreat House: 80 Years

Father Sam Hill Ray, SJ, a dynamic and energetic organizer of these retreats, teamed up with the first bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, Bishop Jules Jeanmard, who wanted a retreat house for the faithful. And so, in 1937 – on the 100th anniversary of the Jesuits' arrival in Grand Coteau – Bishop Jeanmard announced plans for the diocese to build a retreat house on the grounds of St. Charles College. The facility would be turned over to the Jesuits to be used in perpetuity for retreats for both laity and clergy.

Bishop Jeanmard was very devoted to the Blessed Mother. Aware of her recent apparitions at Fatima, he wanted the new retreat house named for her. With the house located in the middle of a large grove of ancient oak trees, the name was easy: Our Lady of the Oaks.

Built in Spanish mission style, the facility features an enclosed courtyard with the peaceful sounds of a flowing fountain and lots of seating. Old oaks grace this central patio where squirrels and birds make themselves at home — to the delight of those who visit. The beauty of God’s creation is on generous display.

Father Ray was the first director, and Jesuits have served in that position, lovingly caring for the house and its guests, ever since. Because Fr. Ray was fluent in French, besides Anglos, he recruited many Cajun retreatants, whose first language was French. In its first full year of operation, 1939, the Oaks hosted some 600 retreatants; that number was about 1,000 in 1947, more than 1,300 in 1952, and more than 2,000 in 2017. Indeed, the retreat movement is alive and well in southern Louisiana.

Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House has expanded its offering of conference-style retreats to men, women and couples. These retreats, preached by both Jesuit priests and by thoroughly trained lay directors, are based on St. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises*. Daily Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Way of the Cross and the Rosary are featured during the retreat, which frequently has a life-altering impact.

For 80 years now, this oasis of prayer has been helping to form the spirituality of people in all walks of life — from Southwest Louisiana and beyond. Our Lady of the Oaks is a jewel in the crown of Grand Coteau, La. This small village, a home for Jesuits for nearly 200 years, is also the place where the Society of the Sacred Heart has educated young women for many years. Grand Coteau is not only beautiful, it is holy ground.

When the retreat house was dedicated, in October of 1938, Bishop Jeanmard expressed the hope that, “the laity will make the retreat house a beehive of spiritual activity.” This hope is continuously being realized as so many find their way to peace and spiritual renewal at Our Lady of the Oaks Jesuit Retreat House.

- Fr. Louis J. McCabe, SJ
A conversation with Joan Gaulene is like suspending time. Once the stories begin to flow, the hours pass in the blink of an eye.

Ms. Gaulene has served as the curator of the former New Orleans Province Archives since 1997 – all as a volunteer. Her “tenure” there began as a detour, but became a ministry, a true labor of love.

“The New Orleans Province Archives houses many treasures; one of the greatest is Joan,” said John Armstrong, SJ. “She is modest about her contribution, but she has played a crucial role to preserve and organize the materials that make up the history of the men and works of the province.

“If it had not been for her tireless and meticulous work, it is not possible to calculate what might have been lost.”

Ms. Gaulene first met the Jesuits between her junior and senior years of high school. She planned on attending college in Maryland; her parents had different ideas. They persuaded Ms. Gaulene to visit Loyola University New Orleans, where she met Fr. Bernard Tonnar, SJ.

During their interview, Ms. Gaulene spoke of how she might pursue a degree in education, which was her mother’s choice for a young woman at the time. Father Tonnar said, “That is all well and good, but what is it that you really want to do?”

Ms. Gaulene confided that her true desire was to become a journalist. Father Tonnar took the time to review the coursework she
would need to do to complete a degree in journalism. As she recalls, “He could see that I had a desire beyond education, and even though it wasn’t very common at the time for a woman to pursue a degree in that field, he encouraged me to follow my heart.”

Ms. Gaulene entered Loyola University New Orleans in 1953.

Some years later, she reconnected with the Jesuits when she became director of university relations at her alma mater. Her president was James C. Carter, SJ, who she credits as the most influential of the three Jesuit presidents she would work with during her communications career.

“Father Carter never lost sight of the core mission of Jesuit higher education and nurtured that dedication in his staff,” Ms. Gaulene said. “It’s easy and very satisfying to do a job when you understand and embrace the goals of a vision.”

Nine years later, her career took her to Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles. There she worked with two Jesuit presidents and her public relations skills were stretched into crisis management after the on-court death of a basketball player. She retired from Loyola Marymount on the Feast of St. Ignatius in 1996.

However much she enjoyed her career, Ms. Gaulene’s heart remained in her native New Orleans. She was born and raised in New Orleans’ Third Ward and attended St. Joseph’s Parish School. She remembers with great fondness that it could take an hour to get home from Mass. She explains, “In those days, Tulane Avenue was lined with homes, and as we walked by, Mom would stop and say hello to a dozen or so friends and neighbors. It was a great place to grow up.”

Upon her return to New Orleans, Ms. Gaulene was quickly recruited to teach part-time in Loyola’s Communications Dept. The classes were “History of Mass Media” and “Communications Writing.” She loved being in the classroom.

One day while walking across campus, she encountered former New Orleans Provincial Thomas Clancy. He inquired about her future, and Ms. Gaulene told him of her plan to become a full-time volunteer at the new National WWII Museum that was due to open in 2000. Father Clancy asked her to consider working with the New Orleans Province archival collection for a couple of months.

As she says, “He was very diplomatic and asked me to simply lend a hand as they would soon be receiving many boxes from Grand Coteau, Louisiana. He said I was the best person for the task because I ‘spoke Jesuit.’ I offered to help out for a while, and here we are nearly 21 years later!”

For her spirit of philanthropy and dedication to the preservation of Jesuit history, Ms. Gaulene was recognized by both the former New Orleans Province and Loyola University. During her time at the Archives, Ms. Gaulene served five provincials and cared for countless books, papers and records.

She recently oversaw the transfer of the New Orleans archival collection to the new Jesuit Archives & Research Center in St. Louis. She freely admits to some sense of loss as the collection was cataloged, boxed up and moved, but considers their new location every archivist’s dream.

As she explains, “Working in the archives of the former New Orleans Province increased my personal spirituality. Most people view an archive as a place for storage: boxes, letters, papers and books. It is so much more. The history of the Society of Jesus is in the archives. I think back on the wonderful Jesuits I have known and served. And now, so many others that I never met but know from the records of their inspiring lives in the Society. They are all very special, and I was privileged to be part of preserving their stories.”

“Working in the Archives of the former New Orleans Province increased my personal spirituality. Most people view an archive as a place for storage: boxes, letters, papers and books. It is so much more.”

– Joan Gaulene

John Fitzpatrick is the provincial assistant for advancement for this province.
Chris Farrell, SJ: God’s Plan is So Much Better

It has to be said: Chris Farrell, SJ, looks like a lumberjack. With a full beard and shoulders that can only come from hours in the weight room, his physical presence is striking. But there is so much more to this thoughtful, prayerful Jesuit who studied accounting but teaches English, leads high school students on pilgrimages in the wilderness and looks forward to where God will bring him in years ahead.

Beginning his senior year at Washington and Lee University, Farrell seemed to have successfully locked up the future he’d been working for: a great job in a great city and the potential for starting a family someday. Instead of feeling satisfied and eager for his future, though, he wondered, “Is this all there is?”

Farrell began considering religious life. “I did exactly what you shouldn’t do,” he said ruefully. “I discerned on my own.” The turning point came when he unknowingly followed one of St. Ignatius’s methods of discernment: he envisioned himself at the end of his life – one with a family and a career in accounting – and asked himself if this was his best possible life. “I knew I would wish I had returned more to God.”

As he prayed and discerned, all the “puzzle pieces” of his life – his enthusiasm for education, the joy he derived from his college fraternity, his hope to be a father and his striving to do something noble with his life – all began to fit together in an unexpected way that made his path clear.

“All these things I was passionate about seemed to be fulfilled in Jesuit life,” he said. “God was calling me to fatherhood in a different sense than I had anticipated. I believe good fathers teach their children what it means to live a good life, and I came to understand that God was calling me to form young men to become good, holy men.”

Students at De Smet Jesuit High School and St. Louis University High School (SLUH) are benefiting from Farrell’s spirit of adventure as well as his call to teach. For the past two summers, he has led pilgrimages to places of significance in Jesuit history. Last year, he and Fr. Joseph Hill, SJ, led a group of 11 De Smet and SLUH students on a Canadian canoe pilgrimage, following in the footsteps of St. Jean de Brébeuf. This summer, he and Fr. Aaron Pidel, SJ, led 11 students on a backpacking pilgrimage in the mountains of Wyoming, where Fr. Peter De Smet, SJ, served as a missionary.

On both trips, Farrell wore the long black cassock familiar to his Jesuit forebears. He could have fit right in with De Smet or Brébeuf or any generation of Jesuits who wanted nothing more than to bring souls to God.

“On our journey to God, it’s easy to be distracted – often by things that are beautiful and good. In a Church that can seem irrelevant to teens, who are all about adventure and their physical bodies, how do we channel this physicality to a holy end? I want to give them an avenue to recognize their energy can be a gift from God.”

Farrell is in his last year of Regency, teaching English and theology to sophomores at De Smet. A powerlifter himself, he also helps students with their workouts. He will apply for theology studies during the course of this year. “God knows where I’ll be after that,” he says. “I like being surprised by God. His plan is so much better than my own.”
“BROTHERS CAN DO ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING. THEY’RE NOT LIMITED BY BEING A BROTHER.”

Br. John Fava, SJ

John Fava, SJ: Blessed to Serve

“If they need a ride, I’m their guy,” Brother John Fava, SJ, says of retired Jesuits who can request his help in getting to their destination from the Jesuit Hall community at Saint Louis University.

Living his ministry from the front seat of a car may seem very different from the inside of a chapel, but Br. Fava’s ministries are just a little out of the ordinary. Not only does he help transport older Jesuits, he has also spent decades riding along with police officers on their calls in St. Louis and Denver.

During his time at Regis Jesuit, when students attended a two-week mini-course at the Police Academy, Br. Fava was invited to ride along for the first time. He enjoyed it so thoroughly, he kept volunteering to ride along for nine years, even before there was a chaplaincy position available. When a position opened, he applied and served 13 years as the police chaplain in Denver. When he moved back to St. Louis, he immediately sought out a way to continue this ministry.

As a volunteer police chaplain, Br. Fava rides with officers as often as he can. That way, he knows the officers who serve the city, and the officers know him. His is truly a ministry of presence. He has served as a St. Louis City Police Chaplain for 15 years; two years ago, he began serving as chaplain for the Saint Louis University Department of Public Safety.

“I consider this a great, great honor,” Br. Fava says of his chaplaincy, especially doing the benedictions for department ceremonies. Among these is the annual candlelight vigil and memorial for officers killed in the line of duty in Missouri, at which he has offered the invocation for nearly a decade.

Brother Fava tries to meet officers wherever they are in their spiritual life, but he never forces his religion or beliefs upon them. As a St. Louis native, he says, “I never bring up anything except the Cardinals!”

He carries out a ministry of presence at other times, too: at the police station, of course, with prayers and fist bumps before officer deployment, but also at weddings and funerals. His ministry embodies the Ignatian impulse to be all things to all people, because “You never know when something is going to pop up; you have to be ready for anything.”

He is grateful for the flexibility the brotherhood allows, which allows him to be available for a conversation, a prayer or a ride, at almost any time: “That’s why I do it.”

Brother Fava sought out the Society of Jesus, compelled, initially, by the desire to teach and to be a priest. During his regency, he was called to become a brother. Through his 20 years as a Spanish teacher at Regis Jesuit High School in Denver, he felt a strong desire to meet the needs of friends and family, asking him to celebrate weddings, funerals and baptisms. Answering God’s call, he was also ordained a permanent deacon.

Brother Fava is joyfully aware of the “limitless opportunities for brothers.” Recalling the Jesuit brothers who were role models for him, and his own varied ministries, Br. Fava said, “Brothers can do anything and everything. They’re not limited by being a brother.” To any young Jesuit discerning the brotherhood, he encouraged, “Go for it.”

Living his vocation back in his hometown, Br. Fava humbly affirms, “This is my way of serving God, the Church, the Society; this is what God has called me to do, and I feel blessed to serve.”
Father John G. Valenta, SJ

Father John G. “Jack” Valenta, SJ, was 95 years old, a Jesuit for 68 years and a priest for 56 years when he died July 10 in St. Louis. A gentle and kind man, he served most of his apostolic life at Rockhurst University. He taught chemistry for more than 20 years, then, after training, he served as a counselor for eight years.

In 1996 he returned to his hometown of St. Louis to serve as chaplain at the Fusz Pavilion, the community for senior Jesuits. He also served as substitute priest in parishes around the area. He continued in this work until 2011, when he retired to an assignment of praying for the Church and Society. At the time of his death, he was the senior member of the Fusz Pavilion community.

Father Kenneth A. Buddendorf, SJ

Father Kenneth A. Buddendorf was 88 years old, a Jesuit for 70 years and a priest for 57 years when he died Aug. 3 in Grand Coteau, La. Remembered by his Jesuit brothers as joyful and enthusiastic, his ministries included work in secondary and higher education and as the first full-time vocation director for the former New Orleans Province. He was committed to the Christian Life Community. While director of Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House in Grand Coteau (1997-2008), he helped develop a program to train directors of the Spiritual Exercises, reflecting his desire to make them more widely available. He was a strong believer in the Gospel's message of justice and compassion, and these were often the focus of his preaching. Above all, he was available for many works of the Society, embracing every mission given him.

Father Nicholas Schiro, SJ

Father Nicholas Schiro considered the religious education and spiritual formation of students as the special ministry to which he had been called. He will doubtless be remembered with great affection by two generations of students at Jesuit High School in New Orleans, where he served for 40 years. He also taught at Jesuit College Preparatory in Dallas for 14 years, 1964 to 1978. His greatest satisfaction was the prayer class he developed and taught. Those who took the class often found it made an impression that stayed with them their entire lives. He was not only a skillful teacher and popular with students, he also helped shape the theology curriculum for Jesuit high schools through his work with the Jesuit Secondary Educational Association (JSEA).

He died Aug. 4 in Grand Coteau, La. He was 90 years old, a Jesuit for 73 years and a priest for 61 years.
Antonio (Tony) and Cindy Prado-Gutiérrez are members of St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Denver. They have formed strong bonds with several Jesuits and support a number of Jesuit ministries, especially those focused on the migrant population. “Our parish is built around Ignatian Spirituality, including its focus on teaching the principles of welcome and Catholic social teaching so important to Tony and me,” Cindy said.

Tony sums it up this way, “As Cindy and I created our will, it was our firm intention that our monetary resources be available to invest in and support the mission of each ministry that is important to us.”

You, too, can create a lasting legacy. For more information please contact the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province Advancement Office at (800) 325-9924 or email UCSAdvancement@Jesuits.org.

What will your legacy be?

“Father Tom Prag, S.J, and Br. Alois Dorsey are two of the Jesuits who inspired Tony and Cindy Prado-Gutiérrez. Father Prag was one of the early supporters of Escuela de Guadalupe in Denver.

Cindy and Tony Prado-Gutiérrez support several Jesuit ministries. Their impact will continue beyond their lives through their will.

“The greatest gift is a portion of thyself.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson
Nov. 2:
THE COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED (All Souls Day)

The Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province invite you to send the names of your deceased loved ones so that we may pray for them.

If you missed our recent mailing, please feel free to write the names of your loved ones on any piece of paper and send it in the envelope found in the center of this magazine. Or you may submit their names on our website at:

connect.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/holysouls

We thank you for all the prayers and support you send our way. Please allow us to pray for your beloved family and friends who have gone before us.