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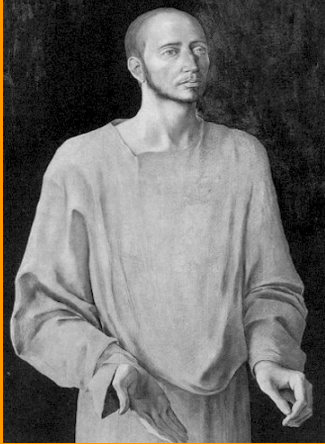


Newsletter of the Ignatian Spirituality Institute

Special Issue:
Gathering the Harvest

Volume 6, Number 3

November 2008



Message from the Director:

November is a time when we appreciate the beauty and blessings of harvest, celebrated with gusto at the Thanksgiving feast. It is a fitting time, as well, to survey the harvest of the ISI. In Luke's gospel, as he was preparing his disciples for mission, Jesus says to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).

A similar spirit marked the beginning of the ISI in February 1999, when Ed Bourguignon, then director of the Cleveland area's Christian Life Communities, suggested that John Carroll begin a spiritual direction training program here. CLC members, desirous of spiritual direction, could not find someone to work with them. Laborers in the vineyard were scarce. Simultaneously, Jack Dister, SJ representing the Detroit Jesuit province, convened a meeting to consider the feasibility of a spiritual direction training program at JCU. There began a long process of development through several planning committees until the Ignatian Spirituality Institute, housed in JCU's Religious Studies Department with full administrative approval, finally opened its doors to students in Fall 2003.

Last June 2008 marked the close of five years of operation. By then, thirty-six laborers for the vineyard had been trained and launched. We decided it was time to gather in the harvest, so to speak: to discover where our graduates have been and what they have accomplished. We sent a survey to the first three classes, and this issue of *Ignis* documents the results. Additionally, five individuals agreed to extended interviews which are summarized here.

This celebratory issue of *Ignis* represents a glorious harvest. Obviously, the full harvest cannot be quantified. What happens in the hearts of individuals remains largely unknown to us. Henri Nouwen reminds us of this:

We tend to think that the more people know and talk about something the more important it must be. That is understandable considering the fact that great notoriety often means big money, and big money often means a large amount of power, and power easily creates the illusion of importance. In our society it is often statistics that determine what's important: the best-selling record, the most popular book, the richest man, the highest building, the most expensive car. With the enormous spread and growth of advertising, it's become nearly impossible to believe that what's really important happens in secret. Yet . . . we do possess some intimations of this (*In My Own Words*, compiled by Robert Durback).

In these days of economic uncertainty it is particularly valuable to remember this. We are being forced to reorganize priorities, and to ponder what is really important. The full impact of our 36 ISI grads touching the lives of some 2000 people in Northeast Ohio remains elusive. Furthermore, because prayer and its fruits are not easily quantifiable, we are tempted to minimize their value. I am reminded of a cartoon I give out to my students. A pastor is in his office, kneeling in prayer. His secretary bursts in and remarks, "Good! You're not busy!" In our frantic society, prayer is considered a luxury, not a necessity; there is sometimes the implication that those who spend hours listening to people recount the story of their life with God could spend their time more profitably elsewhere. Yet those who do develop a habit of daily prayer and the facility of recounting their spiritual ups and downs to a trusted companion find that they are able to be more productive in accomplishing their daily tasks.

All that being true, this issue of *Ignis* unabashedly presents some statistics! It also lets you hear the voices of those who have spent the last year or two or three practicing the ministry of spiritual direction. You will learn where their chosen ministry has taken them, often into places they did not anticipate when they began. I present them with great admiration and pride – Christ's workers in the vineyard. I gather in the ISI's harvest for your appreciation.

Peace and all good things, Joan

Points of Interest

- Message from the Director
- Survey Summary
- Tracking ISI Alums
- Featured Biographies
- Outreach to the Marginalized
- Kudos to ISI Grads
- Peer Supervision
- ISI News and Notes

SURVEY SUMMARY

“Where Are They Now?”

ISI follows its graduates

Over the past 3 years, over 2,000 people have received group or individual spiritual direction from ISI grads!

81% of ISI graduates are doing ongoing spiritual direction with individuals. 55% have offered 19th Annotation retreats, 15% have led individuals in 8-day silent retreats, 15% have directed students on Busy Student Retreats, 7% have led 8-week individual retreats, and 4% have offered 30-day individual retreats.

Since certification, ISI grads have been leading group retreats which reach out to:

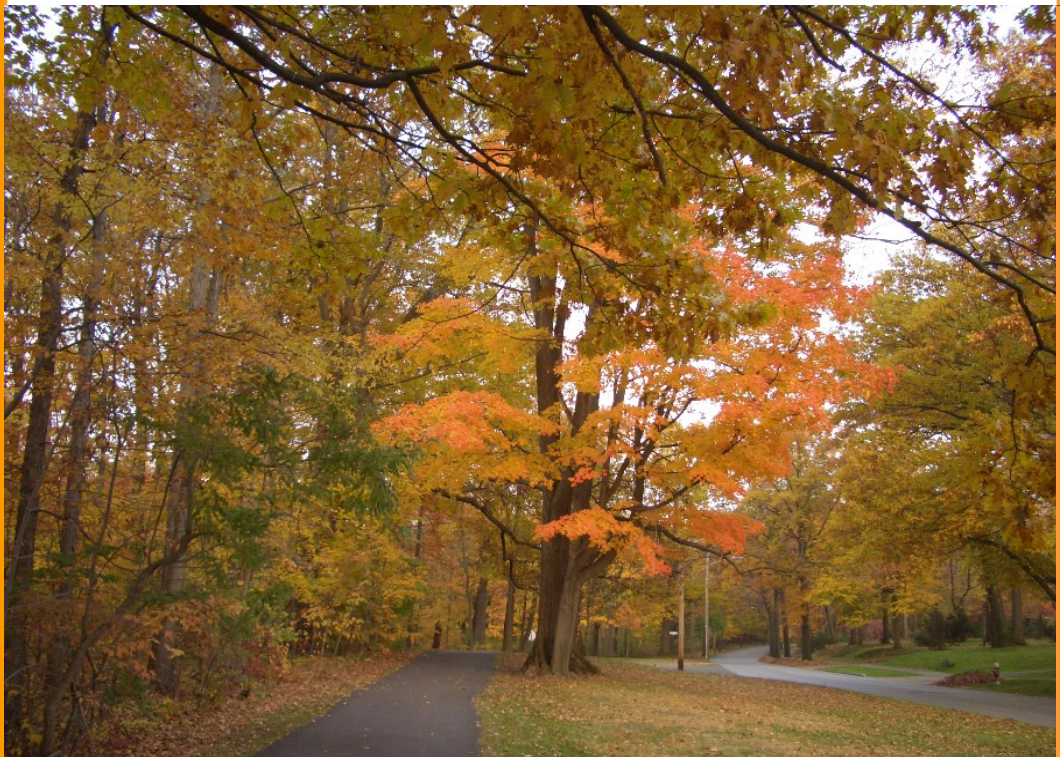
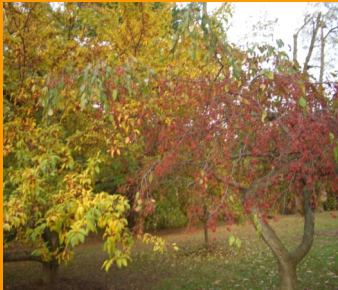
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|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Church groups – 41% | Volunteer groups – 7% |
| College students – 11% | Workplace groups – 7% |
| Vowed religious – 11% | High school students – 4% |
| Teachers – 7% | Homeless men and women – 4% |

ISI graduates spend, on average, 24.5 hours a month in formal spiritual direction. However, the benefits of their ISI training impact all they do in their professional and personal lives.

Besides formal spiritual direction, ISI grads are also using their skills to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Prepare sermons | Supervise ISI interns |
| Lead faith-sharing groups | Assist in building the spiritual life of their parish |
| Assist in discernment to vocation | Engage colleagues in “spiritual conversation” |
| Give presentations on Ignatian spirituality | |

63% of ISI graduates participate in some kind of peer supervision group. 15% of ISI graduates are not in a peer supervision group but would like to get involved with one.



Charter Class of 2005



MARY ANN BARAN, SND

“Over and over again, I see how gently and with such fidelity our God works in the minds and hearts of those who let him do so,” writes Sr. Mary Ann Baran. Mary Ann describes her work in spiritual direction as a process of allowing God to “nudge” and “flood” her directees. She has served as spiritual director or retreat leader for more than three dozen people since she completed the ISI, including people exploring religious discernment as well as sisters in her own community. “This work helps keep me humble and very aware of both my ‘clay’ and about whose ‘work’ spiritual direction really is—God’s!”

TOM BEHREND

The ministry of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Wickliffe has benefited from Ignatian Spirituality, thanks to the presence of Fr. Tom Behrend. Tom works his ISI training into his daily and weekly homilies, while also providing spiritual direction to several individuals in his parish. Group retreats also serve as an avenue to share Ignatian Spirituality with the parish community. Tom finds himself using his spiritual direction skills in a myriad of ways. “There are so many different requests for spiritual direction that are not (really) spiritual direction.” He constantly discovers “how much people really need spiritual direction and don’t even know it.” His challenge is to help them begin to realize it.



DEBBIE DACONE

“Being present to college students opens up many opportunities for direction,” says Debbie Dacone, “often when I least expect it!” Debbie serves Oberlin College as a Newman Catholic Campus Minister, where she incorporates Ignatian spirituality into small-group retreats, Busy Student Retreats, individual spiritual direction and mentorship of young people in the RCIA program. She has recently developed a class entitled “Who Do You Think You Are? Creating Your Spiritual Autobiography.” While she admits that working with young adults can be challenging, she says they offer a fresh, valuable perspective. “They are eager to learn, and faithful to their new prayer life, which inspires me and helps me not to become hardened and cynical!”

MARY KAY JONES

Between presenting parish group retreats, individual 19th Annotation retreats, and programs for Catholic school teachers, Mary Kay Jones is kept busy over the course of a year. She finds her background in the Spiritual Exercises most helpful in her work, and is hoping to expand into more direction of individuals in the future. “Being a part of ISI,” she says, “was one of the best things that ever happened to me. I loved the experience and knowledge I gained.”



MARIAN DURKIN, CSA

“I can do this!” is Sr. Marian Durkin’s refrain. An administrator in her religious community, she finds that Ignatian spirituality helps her to “be present” to the people she encounters in her work. She offers individual spiritual direction as well as group retreats, and has helped to form a new peer supervision group on the south side of Cleveland. In May 2009, Marian will leave her administrative post, after which she hopes to do more spiritual direction, particularly with the gay and lesbian community. “I love the work,” she says, “and I hope it will be an important part of my future.”

EUGENIA GYI

Because of her training in Ignatian spirituality, Eugenia Gyi has been invited to serve on the Spiritual Life Commission and the Adult Education Commission in her parish. The parish also provides space for her group programs, like a new Young Family Small Community Group which she leads. She has offered many individual 19th Annotation retreats and has other ongoing directees. She also does group retreats and spiritual direction for Busy Student Retreats, the Jesuit Retreat House, the Women’s Outreach Center, and the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. “Ignatian Spirituality became part of my life. I cannot even imagine my life, my pastoral ministry activities, my spiritual direction activities without it. Without ISI, I would not have this great treasure.” Eugenia’s ministry to the Women’s Outreach Center is described more thoroughly on page 12.



DONNAMARIE KAMINSKY

"I am continually awed at how God works in individual lives, both the directees' and my own. I am also humbled by how the directee can be a channel of grace for myself. At the core of the human experience, each individual's experience is shared by others, just with different details." DonnaMarie Kaminsky finds this point of view valuable in all of her spiritual direction with individuals and groups. She is currently preparing to launch a Hermitage ministry, which will feature small-group prayer and individually directed retreats at Epiphany Hermitage, a house she owns in Akron (see page 16 for more details).



JUDITH MCGUIRE, CSJ

Judith McGuire exercises her ministry of spiritual direction at her place of work, being companion to her community's sick and elderly sisters. She practices ongoing direction, and leads a group of nine of her sisters through the 19th Annotation Retreat "as a means of getting together in the spirit of Father Medaille, SJ [the founder of her order]." This is an ongoing group. Once finished this year, "we will begin again!"

JOHN ROPAR

As the Director of John Carroll University's Counseling Center, John Ropar has many opportunities to put his skills as a spiritual director to work. He has directed students and others in the 19th Annotation, the 8-Day Silent Retreat, and ongoing spiritual direction, and also provides spiritual direction and guidance to students in immersion and volunteer programs. "I am constantly finding that my doing direction feeds my own spiritual life, and leads me to insights and an affirmation and appreciation for the universal longing for a deeper relationship with The Greater."



(NB: Charter Class members, Bruce Batchelor-Glader, Rita Carfagna and Sheila Flynn are featured on pages 8—11).

Class of 2006

KAREN BROER

"What I learned in ISI was more than knowledge," says Karen Broer. "I have appropriated much into my daily experience so as to live the Ignatian way." Karen's "daily experience" is a full schedule. She squeezes time for spiritual direction into a schedule already packed with a full-time job as a psychologist at the Cleveland Clinic and a part time job teaching at John Carroll University. Karen says, "Working both as a spiritual director and a psychologist can sometimes be challenging, but overall I have been able to integrate and separate the roles when appropriate." She continues to work with individual directees and says that in the future, she hopes to try her hand at writing on the topic of the relationship between spirituality and counseling.



MARY ANN BURKE, SND

The ISI prepared Sr. Mary Ann Burke well for her current ministry as Regional and Ongoing Formation Director for the Sisters of Notre Dame. Her experiences in the ISI, especially the practicum, supervision, and group sharing, have helped her in this ministry and in the regular spiritual direction she does with individuals. She says that the most important thing she has learned is the need for prayer both before and after an individual session of spiritual direction. "It continues to be a learning experience," says Mary Ann.



PAT CLEARY-BURNS

While most people add spiritual direction to other work and life obligations, Pat Cleary-Burns is one of the few whose spiritual direction has taken shape as a full-time ministry. He provides ongoing direction and 19th Annotation accompaniment for several people, as well as leading group and individual retreats. He is also leading discernment retreats with parishes as a part of the Diocese's clustering process. "It requires enormous patience and openness to let a 'practice' of spiritual direction and retreat leadership take shape," he says. "It has taken me in directions I never expected." One of these surprising new directions is the recent launching of an "itinerant retreat ministry." For more information see page 14.



A spiritual director and part-time pastor of Nova Community United Methodist Church in Nova, Ohio, Harry Finkbone is always balancing spiritual direction with pastoral care. “The greatest challenge,” he says, “is bringing awareness of and desire for this special ministry into the parish and the denomination.” He provides spiritual direction for several people and also offers retreats for area churches. Harry has helped start up a new peer supervision group on the south side of Cleveland this year. Harry is currently a student in the Doctor of Ministry program at Ashland Theological Seminary, with a major in Spiritual Formation.



HARRY FINKBONE



JANET LEHANE

“Each aspect of my life informs and is informed by direction,” says Janet Lehane. Since her certification, Janet has taken on a variety of projects in spiritual direction, including 30-week retreats, monthly individual direction, and group retreats at locations around the area. Last summer, she made a retreat to “broaden her sense of the Universe Story” in order to incorporate it into the work she is doing. Janet was recently hired as the co-director of the Spirituality Program for Adults (SPA) at St. Ignatius High School, which will enable her to give more time to direction in the future.

RICH JERDONEK

“God is working dramatically in the lives of so many people,” says Rich Jerdonek, whose ministry as a spiritual director leads him to work with dozens of individual directees throughout the year, especially through St. Ignatius High School’s Spirituality Program for Adults and the Busy Student Retreats on area campuses. In this role, Rich finds that he is grateful for his ISI training in classroom exercises, role-playing, reflection papers and practicum. “I see a critical need for developing the spirituality of lay men in the Church,” he says, and therefore is currently developing new retreats and parish programs for men.



ED PECK

Ed’s primary focus is the spiritual formation of students, faculty and staff on the University campus. In his capacity as the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at John Carroll, Ed offered retreats, individual spiritual direction, and campus presentations about Ignatian Spirituality, and constantly explored new ways to apply the Exercises within the context of Jesuit and Catholic higher education. “In particular,” he writes, “I am looking at the ways service, immersion, and core curriculum contribute to the spiritual formation of students, staff, and faculty.” This past June, Ed became the founding Executive Director of the Ignatian Colleagues Program run by the Heartland/Delta Jesuit schools, which he expects will offer “many opportunities for the sharing of ideas and resources about the spiritual formation of people in our schools.”



PETER NIELSEN

An Episcopal Deacon by trade, Peter Nielsen interacts with hundreds of people as a spiritual director and retreat leader in his position as Director of Cedar Hills Camp and Conference Center. He is also involved in a parish life program called Soul Companions. “I continue to be amazed at the presence of the Holy Spirit in this work, and I rejoice in my serving as a stimulus for others to approach God and address their most primal desire, intimacy with the Creator.” He continues to welcome the challenge of adapting the language of the Exercises for a contemporary audience.



CAROL ROALDI

Ignatian spirituality has “traveled south” with Carol Roaldi, who has recently set up residence in Florida. As she settles into her new, warmer home, she is looking forward to bringing her skills as a retreat leader and spiritual director to her local parish there.



TRACKING ISI ALUMS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Class of 2007

“My discovery,” writes Jackie Bluett, “is that spiritual direction does not have to be formalized to be spiritual direction.” In her work as the associate director of the St. Malachi Center, she leads workplace prayer every morning and directs staff retreats. She also leads a variety of group retreats and prayer gatherings, and serves as the point of communication between the parish Spiritual Development committee and small prayer groups in the parish. Jackie works with a variety of group retreats as well as with individuals in spiritual direction. She particularly enjoys accompanying people through the 19th Annotation Retreat.



JACKIE BLUETT



JOAN CARNEY

“The more I know, the more I realize I don’t know,” exclaims Joan Carney. When people describe her as “well-trained in Ignatian Spirituality,” she adds the qualifier, “I am a *student* of Ignatian Spirituality.” Joan’s role as “student” has not ended with the ISI – she is now pursuing a Master’s Degree in Religious Studies at John Carroll. In addition to her work as an individual spiritual director, Joan also presents parish retreats, one-day group retreats, and presentations on Ignatian spirituality. She has also just become a grandmother for the first time.

JULIE EXLINE

“The theological framework that the ISI provided has affected my own thinking about God in a profound and positive way,” says Julie Exline. Although at the moment she is not working in formal spiritual direction, Julie finds ways of reaching out to others in impromptu, informal moments of spiritual direction. “Ignatian ideas and techniques often make their way into other conversations that I have with friends and professional colleagues,” she explains, and “Ignatian concepts indirectly inform my research, teaching, and writing as well.” A member of the Psychology faculty at Case Western Reserve University, Julie is involved in a variety of new projects, including a major research project on anger at God.



ELAINE GAUGHAN

Elaine Gaughan supplements her work as Director of Religious Education at St. Peter the Apostle Church in Brook Park with offering individual spiritual direction and a Lenten group retreat. She also continues to exercise her ministry with post-abortion women at Bethesda, The House of Mercy, a ministry of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Her time in this ministry has enabled her to put the skills learned in the ISI to good use. Her greatest challenge in her ministry comes with encountering resistance in her directees, but “if they stay with [prayer] long enough,” she says, “they eventually lose their resistance.” She is continually impressed by “how patient God is.” As for future plans, Elaine hopes to return to school, possibly in 2009.

CAROL GYORKI

Ignatian retreats in a variety of parishes keep Carol Gyorki busy as a retreat leader, but she continues to plan for more. She is involved in her own parish, helping develop the spiritual life of the community, and is also actively seeking more directees on the east side of Cleveland for individual spiritual direction. “One of the greatest challenges in ministry is to keep my own spiritual development alive and authentic,” she says, “to live what I teach.”



ANDY KEREKY

Children and their families are now receiving the benefit of the Spiritual Exercises, thanks to the age-appropriate adaptation of the Exercises developed through the creativity of Andy Kereky. Since completing the ISI program, Andy has designed and offered several eleven-week “enhanced” Ignatian retreats for children and families, in addition to individual spiritual direction and 19th Annotation retreats. “Students seem to respond well to this opportunity to deepen their prayer life, bible praying, and relationship with the Lord through the retreat experience.” Andy recently completed his Doctor of Ministry program at St. Mary’s Seminary. “My experience in the ISI program was a tremendous help in my doctoral program,” he says. “I’m convinced the project would not have been as effective had it not been for the ISI program.”

EILEEN NOVOTNY

As she gets more and more involved with developing various themed retreats for the Ursuline Center in Canton, Eileen's ministry has taken shape in a variety of new ways. She has even purchased a laptop and projector in order to offer a "high-tech" retreat experience! She keeps busy with several ongoing directees and some 19th Annotation retreats. She is looking forward to taking more time to develop retreat materials and read more about Spiritual Direction. "I have come to a place of great peace and contentment. I love this ministry and it has a great effect on everything I do, on all my relationships, and my relationship with God."



NANCY ROWELL

The majority of Nancy's work in spiritual direction has been through the retreats that she plans and facilitates for homeless men and women at sites around Cleveland. She also leads groups in the workplace. "As much as an awareness of God's presence grows so does an awareness of moments for ministry in the world," she writes. The ISI was a wonderful experience for her, she says, "grounded in theology and learned in practice." Nancy's work with the homeless is featured on page 13.



MARIA SKRABEC

The ISI program has given Maria Skrabec the tools she needed to be a part of a "spirituality task force" at Euclid Hospital, attempting to provide spirituality programming for patients. She is still providing individual spiritual direction to one person she started directing while an intern at ISI, as well as others. "I am awed by the work of the Holy Spirit," she writes, "as I discover the depth of God's love in the working of people that I have gotten to know through the ISI program, SPA and fellow spiritual directors." She hopes to get more involved with parish retreat programming in the future.



MELINDA SMITH, MD

In her work as an OB/GYN, Melinda Smith has found that her certification as a spiritual director gives her a different perspective on her medical practice. "I listen to my patients with a different ear than I did prior to ISI." She senses a "growing call for the melding of medicine and spirituality" on the horizon, and is looking forward to discovering what that might mean. In the meantime, she offers some retreats and spiritual direction while continuing with her medical practice: a ministry in itself, "as she says, "outside of the official box."



MARY ANN SPANGLER, HM

College students are fortunate to have the excellent work of Sr. Mary Ann Spangler in their spiritual direction experience. Since her certification, she has taken on dozens of directees, particularly students in Busy Student Retreats or other retreat experiences. As she grows in her ministry, she says, "I have become very sensitive to the difference between counseling and spiritual direction. I have also become much more aware of ways to pray and ways to share that with others." Her connection with ISI has helped to build a network of other directors and ministers in the area: "I have several others who share the ministry and are great mentors."



BRUCE BATCHELOR-GLADER (ISI '05)

**“It’s about presence.”**

Bruce Batchelor-Glader loves to talk about grace. A Methodist pastor, Bruce entered the Ignatian Spirituality Institute in its first year in order to “sharpen the saw” of his ministry, and discovered a whole new depth to his spirituality as well. He discovered in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola a theology of grace which echoed in many ways the spirituality he’d absorbed from the thinking of Methodist founder John Wesley. “I’d never done the 19th Annotation until my first year at the Institute,” Bruce says, “and as I worked my way through it I discovered that John Wesley’s theology of grace is so similar to St. Ignatius. It’s the theology of grace that is working behind the scenes, wooing us, focusing on God’s guidance, God’s presence, and God’s leading us away from the dark. I realized, ‘Oh, that’s similar!’ Grace informed so much of the Exercises for me.”

In the three years since his certification, Bruce has had ample opportunity to practice a deepening theology of presence and grace in his ministry, which he frequently describes as “a good life, a very good life.” Now in his 30th year of ministry, Bruce has served in several churches around Ohio and is currently the pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Port Clinton, Ohio. “It’s a very good match; we like each other,” he says of his congregation. He admits, however, that the “spiritual director part of him” does occasionally encourage him to practice “sneaky theology,” as he introduces new and exciting ideas to his church community. “I like my theology to be a covert sort of thing, informed by grace and mercy. I don’t want to be overt about the fact that I’m teaching anybody anything. They will eventually catch it for

themselves; I don’t have to be dogmatic or try to shove things in their faces.”

Bruce moonlights as a film critic, with a regular column called “The Message in the Movies” for a Methodist website. He admits that he misses being near the city, with easy access to the Cleveland Cinematheque! It is also difficult to summon up resources for spiritual direction, so far from the city: “I feel like the Maytag repairman out here.” His next challenge, he says, will be working his way into a community of spiritual direction and peer supervision in his area.

The small size of the town, while occasionally a challenge, has also meant ample opportunities for exciting ecumenical outreach: “We have Catholics, Presbyterians, Assemblies of God, Evangelical churches. I really do believe that if you inform things with graciousness and openness, people are crying out for connections.” This ecumenical bridge-building on the part of Bruce and others has borne fruit. Port Clinton is primarily a retirement community that has seen a burgeoning new cooperative youth ministry grow up among ten local churches of different denominations.

Bruce is involved with an enormous variety of church and community projects. He is the president of the Port Clinton Clergy Association, serves on the board of the local Habitat for Humanity chapter, convenes book clubs and prayer groups, teaches classes on the Spiritual Exercises, organizes a healing ministry, and is currently working to help develop a facility to provide for the safe transfer of children between parents in the middle of separation or divorce. In all of this work, he emphasizes the lessons of spiritual direction in building community. “Your faith can’t just be informed by your time with God,” he says; “it has to be informed by someone you can be open to, who can listen to you.”

Though his ministry in the church and the community leaves him little time for any additional work, Bruce hopes to take on more spiritual direction – both as a director and a directee. “You can’t really direct without being directed: it’s just not wise. We have too many religious folks who just don’t seem to feel a need for that.” He acknowledges that his work at the ISI taught him this. “I tip my hat to the Catholics who are really front-and-center about making that be known.”

Bruce arrived at the Ignatian Spirituality Institute thanks to his spiritual director, a Jesuit, who suggested that he apply only a few days before the application deadline for the first class. “I ran like a crazy man,” he remembers, “trying to get my letters of recommendation.” He speaks of the program with glowing praise. “I received more than I bargained for in two years with the ISI. It was affordable and exciting. It was very much a

grace-note for my week. After I was done with everything, I looked at all my paperwork and said, ‘Holy moly, did I do all that work?’ I couldn’t believe it; you just do one paper at a time and they pile up! It reminded me that I could still crank that stuff out if I had to, and that if I really love something, I can achieve it.”

That message is one that Bruce communicates often, not only to his congregation and to spiritual directees, but also to his family. He met his wife, Sue, in seminary, and they have raised two sons, both of whom are now professional musicians. He remembers always telling his sons, “find something you love to do, then it won’t seem like work.” Growing up as a triplet in a large family – he has several other siblings in addition to his two triplet sisters – Bruce learned early on to be, in his words, “Mr. Cool, Mr. Non-Anxious,” a characteristic that serves him well in his current ministry. When asked about his method for addressing political and interpersonal challenges, he shrugs expressively. “Grace is pretty irresistible. If people are going to hate me for caring about people, they’re going to have to deal with that. I’d rather get rid of that hatred, that animosity. I don’t hate people because I’m a good guy – it’s really that I don’t hate people because I’m just too lazy. It takes too much energy to hate.”

This theology of love as “the simpler way” anchors much of Bruce’s theology. “My theology of Christ just has to be open and inclusive,” he insists, “because that’s what the Kingdom’s all about, and if you’re not there you might be pretty disappointed when you see it for what it is! If there’s one God, and the Cross means what it means, God wants everybody in the club, so I don’t lose any sleep over it.” Bruce speaks highly about the ways in which this Kingdom was lived out by his classmates while he was in the ISI. “The group dynamic was fantastic. What I loved was, if somebody wasn’t there, you missed them.” One of only two clergy members in his ISI class, Bruce expresses admiration for the other people in the program. “I was particularly impressed by the high level of dedication in the Catholic laity, just a lot of involvement in the church. I would just die to have someone in my parish who would be that motivated and focused and wanting to learn to grow.”

When asked what’s next on the horizon, Bruce smiles broadly: “I can see myself working until I’m seventy!” He has been moved through many church communities over the course of his ministry, and says he won’t be surprised if he is asked to move again. “I’d like to think I can live and do this ministry, anywhere,” he says. He’s sure no matter where he goes, he’ll find a connection with St. Ignatius of Loyola.



RITA CARFAGNA (ISI ‘05)

“I like being in the God business!”

Rita Carfagna could be called “the mother of Northeast Ohio’s Ignatian parish retreat.” In the four years since she completed her first year with the Ignatian Spirituality Institute, Rita has taken on the task of organizing and leading a series of parish group retreats based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. These retreats have become so popular that an entire team of leaders has joined the project to help meet the demand for additional retreats around the area. The Jesuit Retreat House has taken it on as a full-scale outreach program. In only four years, these retreats have moved into over 17 parishes and worked with more than 1,000 people. “That really gets me excited,” Rita says of the growing program, “because I see great potential for more.”

“Potential” aptly describes Rita’s vision: when asked about her work as a spiritual director, she speaks of the challenge of continuing to grow in her abilities. “I know I have miles to go on that,” she protests, but it is clear from the success of her programs that many miles have been traveled already. “That wasn’t always my journey,” Rita is quick to point out. For years a homemaker by vocation, Rita has raised four children (now 29, 27, 25 and 21), developing her leadership skills and strategic thinking through volunteer work, board work, and other community projects.

Perhaps her most unusual community project is the Lake County Captains; Rita and her husband, along with other family members, have owned the local minor league baseball team for the past six years. Her summers are generally spent in the stands, watching hundreds of baseball games with her family. “I always bring Ignatian Spirituality to it, finding God in all things,” she says. “I walk around that ballpark and I keep thinking, ‘Okay God, what is it that you want me to do here?’ It’s a wonderful opportunity to practice hospitality and generosity, making people feel welcome, bringing joy into their lives. There’s a huge place in this world for happiness and joy, and there’s a great value in that.”

Before beginning her studies at the ISI, Rita spent several years developing a personal spirituality with a distinctly Ignatian flavor through St. Ignatius High School's Spirituality Program for Adults (SPA), which offers eight-week retreats to adults connected with the high school. It was in this program that she discovered the desire to become a spiritual director. "I don't even know where it came from," she says, but she followed her heart and became involved as a small-group facilitator for SPA. Because of encouragement from the SPA program, she knew of the ISI before it actually began. "As soon as it opened I was there," she says. "I loved it, I loved every minute of it." Her classmates were a particularly valuable part of the program for her. "The fifteen of us really bonded as a group," she says. "I miss them."

The program was a new experience for Rita, who studied business in college and had never done any academic religious studies. She explains that she had to learn to "sift" the information she was learning, experiencing a dramatic shift in her faith. "You're learning all of this for the first time, and it changes your whole perspective; the way you relate to Scripture (and everything else) gets changed drastically. I remember coming out of a class once, thinking, 'I think I still want to be a spiritual director, but I'm not sure I still believe in God!'"

In her second year in the ISI, Rita decided to adapt the SPA program materials to a parish setting. "We took that model, tweaked the materials to make them more user-friendly for that population. You keep it simple, keep it one page." The parish retreats are led by laypeople, a fact which has been important as the program continues to grow. It has also become a way for church communities to help facilitate their clustering process as the diocese encourages parishes to work more collaboratively. Her most recent retreat boasted equal numbers of attendees from each of the three different parish communities in one cluster.

Rita says that the spirituality of the Exercises learned in the ISI served her well in the development of these retreats. "We do some presenting every week, we talk about who Ignatius was, what led him to write the Exercises. We talk about how to pray with Scripture, journaling, examination of consciousness, all the things we also talked about in the ISI. Without it, well, if you're in a leadership role like that, you have to have something behind you to say, 'I've actually done some work to get me here,' to make you more credible." Much of the presentations have to do with encouraging a new focus on Scripture. "Catholics, we're not really raised to pray with Scripture. The first time we did this, someone said to me, 'I didn't know that reading Scripture could be praying.' And the other night, someone said, 'I've been to Bible studies, but I wanted something other than a Bible study. This is different from Bible study – it takes you *into* Scripture, gives you a chance to go deeper'."

Rita finds that her parish retreats lead people into individual spiritual direction as well. "I love doing this [retreat] work, but it's not real true-blue spiritual direction, so I'm able to balance that by continuing to hook up with people who want to do the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat or regular spiritual direction." She usually sees four or five people for individual spiritual direction each year, in addition to her regular cycle of parish retreats.

Rita's most exciting challenge in the future will be to continue to nurture the parish retreat program. Collaboration with the Jesuit Retreat House now allows the program to be available to more parishes, and the demand for similar retreats continues to grow around the region. "I'm very grateful. The Holy Spirit is apparently present in this process, and in favor of it, because this thing just keeps growing. Many people are changed by it, and want to continue it on or take it to their parish. It never ceases to amaze me how God is always working on us."

SHEILA FLYNN (ISI '05)

"We are all naturally contemplatives."

Sheila Flynn is described by her ISI classmates as "the lifelong learner." When asked how long she has been taking classes on spirituality, she gets a distant look in her eyes and has to think for a moment before she answers. "Fifteen years," she decides. Sheila began enrolling in courses at St. Mary's Seminary just as she was preparing to retire from her 32 years as a first grade teacher in the Cleveland Public Schools. Much of her teaching career was dedicated to working with children of non-English speaking families. "When I was on the West Side I taught all the Hispanic children, then everyone who had a second language: they gave to me Vietnamese, Laotian. I worked with adults in their community, too, so listening and communicating were very important." This focus on careful communication has made Sheila a natural choice for spiritual direction for young people and old alike. She has been surprised at the variety of people who seek her out for spiritual direction. "I've had the privilege of having a wide range of persons. I thought I would only be seeing women, women with my similar experience. I do, but it's also been all kinds of people: women religious, men, young and old, students, and a lot of professionals too; that really surprised me. People who are coming to discern the next stage in their life; sometimes just people who want to deepen their relationship with Christ."

Sheila's spiritual direction has taken a different turn from what she had originally intended: "When I decided I was going to do this, I thought I was going to take it to where the people didn't have access to spiritual directors, but it didn't work out. I thought I'd take it to women in prison, but that didn't happen." She has found, instead, that spiritual direction helps her to "walk the journey" with many people in a great variety of professions. "Some of the people that I see are in social justice work. It's amazing: although I never got to do prison ministry, I'm seeing someone who does. Although I'm not working with the homeless, I'm seeing someone who does. Things I'm not doing myself, I can walk along the journey with someone else who's doing them."



Part of Sheila’s effectiveness as a spiritual director, she believes, is her ability to empathize with this wide variety of people. “It’s an interesting mix,” she says. “I think I have a lot of compassion.” This empathy grows out of the life experience she brings to her work. “To be perfectly honest, my life had enough bumps in the road to have some experience. My children are adopted from Guatemala, with that third-world experience right off the bat, having a big family. Then, out of five children, three had issues. We had to get into 12-Step work, had to learn that. I went through my own depression, my own spiritual direction and my own therapy. I’m able to understand some of the heartbreaks and issues. And struggle! I’m divorced, so I had to recreate my own life around 50 or so. And I’m sure there’s more! I can bring an awful lot of life experience to my ministry, because my experience has been so varied.”

A good deal of Sheila’s current life experience revolves around her “little spiritual director,” her infant granddaughter, Mia, with whom she spends most of her week. “She’s a little contemplative. Just the attention – the loving attention, it’s just so natural. And her presence, she’s just a picture of awareness. I guess we are all naturally contemplatives, but we forget Who we belong to. I borrow Fr. Gray’s words: attention, reverence and devotion. That’s part of the Exercises, too: you’re getting people to pay attention to their experience, give reverence to their experience, so their love for Christ just grows. This baby has all this attention, reverence and devotion in her little person.”

Sheila is quick to point out that she relies heavily on the material she learned as a student in the ISI. She names theology, communication skills, and psychology as important areas of

learning, but she focuses particularly on the value of learning to appreciate the particular charism of St. Ignatius of Loyola. “I probably wouldn’t have counted him as one of my mystic friends,” she admits. “I would have picked John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila and left poor Ignatius out of it.” The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius have been deeply important to Sheila’s own faith journey, and also to her ministry in spiritual direction.

Sheila finds that, while guiding people through the Exercises, much of her time as a spiritual director is spent helping people with their own processes of discernment. She describes this as “accompaniment” and “midwifing”: “It’s just being there by their side as new life happens, bringing something to birth in them, whether it is a deepening or a newfound relationship with Scripture, or a new life choice. It isn’t always joyful either; I’ve been with people who have an awful lot of suffering to go through. But, I enjoy the discernment. The thing about that is, you’re encouraging people to make free, loving choices. It leads so much to freedom, and people begin to choose what they love. It’s fun to watch how surprised they are that God has also chosen for them what they love, that those two match. You can see that a person becomes more free and more joyful.”



EUGENIA GYI (ISI' 05)

Spiritual Direction 'With a Hook'

The phrase "spiritual direction" does not usually call to mind sweaters, scarves and potholders. For Eugenia Gyi, however, her desire to bring spiritual direction to the poor has developed into twice-weekly classes in which she teaches crochet to Cleveland women who are homeless and marginalized. These classes provide a "safe space" for women to learn a skill together and to share their stories in a non-judgmental environment. "Is this spiritual?" Eugenia asks with a shrug. "I guess so!"

Eugenia, a 2005 graduate of the ISI, did not set out to teach crochet. As a spiritual director, she felt called to work with the poor, so for her ISI practicum she developed a weekly book discussion group on spiritual themes at the Payne Avenue Women's Shelter in downtown Cleveland. The group continued on and off for nearly three years, studying the same book the entire time. It was less stable, however, than Eugenia had expected. "We never had a steady group," she explains. Each week the group was different, as women transitioned in and out of temporary residence at the shelter. The books that had been purchased and distributed to the women disappeared quickly, lost or stolen or forgotten. Eugenia chuckles now at her original assumption that the women would return each week with the books they had been given. Now, when she plans book discussion groups, she distributes the books at each session, reads the book selection aloud with the group, and collects the books at the end. She shrugs away the loss of the first collection of books. "Maybe someday they will read it," she says.

So how did a book group become a crochet class? One day, Eugenia showed up for her book group with a large quantity of yarn that had been donated. When she offered it to the women, they asked her if she could teach them how to knit so that they could make something useful with it. Knitting needles are a forbidden item at the women's shelter, so she offered to bring in crochet hooks and teach the group how to crochet. The excitement over this suggestion was contagious. "Book reading never sounded that attractive to them," she admits, but crochet was a different story. "Many, when they learn to crochet, say, 'I could never imagine I could do something like this!' There's a bright happiness there when they learn how to do something new."

The crochet classes have been so successful that she has added a second location, the Women's Outreach Center at Franklin Circle Christian Church on the Near West Side of Cleveland. The women learn almost faster than Eugenia can teach them. "In five years, I have had to become a very good teacher," Eugenia laughs. "I can teach left-handed, right-handed, shaky hands, no fingers, whatever." The women have gotten better over time, too, learning to make hats, blankets, and socks. "Suddenly they can create something they can give," explains Eugenia. "They say, 'I'm going to do something for my baby, for my mother! I can finally give something!'" Both the Women's Outreach Center and the Payne Avenue Women's Shelter can be challenging environments, Eugenia admits, but she has learned to adapt. While she was nervous at first, she has learned to be firm and confident. "I'm very comfortable," she says emphatically, "I'm never afraid. I learned how to handle the environment." When asked how she deals with conflict and tense situations, she says, "when people are getting emotional or out of control, I go hug them. I just rely on my senses."

How does her ISI training help her in this unusual environment? "It's nothing like the one-on-one of traditional spiritual direction," she says. "It's more like mingling, just being present." The women in her groups just want to have fun, to learn something new, to share their stories and their faith with someone who will listen. Her training as a spiritual director, she says, has given her the ability to "be comfortable just listening," without trying to judge or fix the situation. Many of the women in her groups struggle with issues of substance abuse, mental illness, and depression, in addition to financial hardship. Sadly, for some women, the only hope is to become ill enough to qualify for government assistance. "The motivation there is not to get better, it's to get sicker," says Eugenia. "I don't know how to change this. I just hope we can at least make a change by helping them be around people who won't bring them down."

Eugenia's students at the Women's Outreach Center are glad of her participation there. "I'm a slow learner," says one participant, "but Sister Eugenia is really patient with me." She proudly displays the pieces of a blanket she is putting together. The careful stitches testify to many hours of painstaking work. Eugenia laughs at the honorary title: "They know I'm somehow a spiritual person," she says, and because most of the other leaders at the Women's Outreach Center are women religious, she is often called "Sister Eugenia" or "Pastor Eugenia." Her students enter the room weary from bus travel or walking, but are eager to begin crocheting. They pull yarn and hooks out of cubbyholes along one wall and show off their hard work to one another. Soon hooks are flashing and the room is full of warm chatter. Is it spiritual? As Eugenia says, "I guess so."





NANCY ROWELL (ISI '07)

“A grateful way of seeing the world.”

Nancy Rowell is another ISI graduate who is using her training as a spiritual director to work with the homeless and marginalized. For Nancy, retreat work with the poor made sense, because it fit with the most important lessons she learned in the ISI. “The ISI teaches you to have deep respect for others,” she says, “and that is a profound gift. It’s very helpful in encouraging you to take the time out to reflect on that gift, to be confident in it.” That “deep respect,” she says, is the most important gift a person can have in her particular ministry. Nancy, in collaboration with other local spiritual directors (including other ISI alumni) and the Jesuit Retreat House, has organized several retreats for homeless and marginalized men and women from around the Cleveland area. These men and women’s retreat series, rooted in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, are based on retreats prepared by the Chicago-based Ignatian Spirituality Project, whose specific purpose is the creation of Ignatian retreats for homeless individuals (see www.ignatianspiritualityproject.org).

Nancy emphasizes that providing retreats for the homeless requires a different kind of commitment for directors. It is crucial, she says, for retreat directors to follow up with participants after the retreat has ended. A spiritual retreat can often bring new discoveries to the surface, bringing someone closer to God, but then at the end of the retreat the person can feel “dropped, left like a beached whale,” as Nancy graphically puts it. This “drop” can be prevented by maintaining an ongoing connection with participants: “we make a commitment, in these retreats, to journey with them.” This is why retreats are offered in a series, in order to keep the same people connected over an extended period of time. “Though there are many issues for the homeless, the biggest is isolation, from God and from others. We try to create a space for ongoing connection.” Building connections among individuals is as important as building individuals’ relationships with God. Nancy’s visual image for this process is the Cross which has “both a vertical and a horizontal aspect.”

In order to facilitate these connections, Nancy works with a variety of other organizations to bring together teams of retreat directors and groups of participants who have an ongoing relationship with one another. The retreats for men have been offered in collaboration with the men’s shelter at 2100 Lakeside, while retreats for women have been offered with the support of the Payne Avenue Women’s Shelter and the West Side Catholic Center. She is currently working on developing a project that can be offered through Cleveland Catholic Charities. Nancy speaks warmly of the “spirit of collaboration” she experiences in her association with team members and organizations.

Her most important collaborations, however, are those she builds with retreat participants. “It’s such a grateful way of seeing the world,” she says, shaking her head at the experiences that some participants share. “One woman this weekend,” she says, “was talking about washing her single pair of underwear in the sink at McDonald’s every morning.” The profound challenges facing many of the people she meets, she says, are heartbreaking, but she also finds herself “so inspired with how they get through their hardships.” These hardships can also introduce unusual challenges for those offering retreats. “You want to connect,” explains Nancy, “yet they don’t have ways you *can* connect.” Dealing with a transient population, with inconsistent access to telephones or other communication, makes it difficult to stay as connected as the retreat directors would like. The overcrowded, understaffed shelter environments add to the challenge; shelter staff cannot dedicate much time to identifying appropriate participants for the retreats. Confidentiality concerns make it difficult for retreat directors to contact shelter residents directly.

The Spiritual Exercises are, for Nancy, a key component in the transformative power of these retreats. “I think what Ignatius offers is unusual because the *movement* of the Exercises invites participants into relationship with God. That whole aspect of conversion doesn’t even have to be specifically Christian. It’s an approach,” she says, “that can work for everyone.” Most importantly, the Exercises are an approach that calls spiritual directors into more direct contact with the poor, and one that Nancy continues to explore in her life and ministry. “The Ignatian method demands that you go into the world. To live it out, you have to find God in everything, especially the marginalized.”

KUDOS TO ISI GRADS!

Rita Carfagna (ISI '05) who, with her colleague Ginny Pippin, presented a session at the Conference on Ignatian Spirituality, a national gathering held every three years at St. Louis University. The presentation outlined the process of developing and leading the “Praying with St. Ignatius” series, which brings the Spiritual Exercises into the parishes of the Cleveland diocese by providing 8-week group retreats for parishioners. The session was very well received. For information about the retreat program sponsored by the Jesuit Retreat House, see their website, www.jrh-cleveland.org/retreats.

Patrick Cleary-Burns (ISI '06) on the formation of his newly incorporated venture, Itinerant Retreat Leaders, Inc. which intends to connect “talented retreat leaders with creative retreat centers.” For more information about Pat and his ministry, consult www.patclearyburns.net or www.itinerantretreats.org.

Julie Exline (ISI '07) who received a major research grant from the John Templeton Foundation. She spent last summer at Cambridge University in the UK as a fellow in their School of Divinity participating in their science and religion study group.

DonnaMarie Kaminsky (ISI '05) who received two awards last summer. The first was from the National VA Hospice & Palliative Care Program for “Outstanding Service in Educating Staff on Bereavement Care.” DonnaMarie’s achievement was the Educational Module for Bereavement, a curriculum designed to be taken on the computer, written with a colleague. Approved at the National VA level, it is now being piloted in several VA facilities across the country. The curriculum is designed for doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, and chaplains – might we add spiritual directors? – anyone who does not have formal training in bereavement care, but who is in a situation where bereavement is an issue for a client. DonnaMarie’s second award was her National Certification as a VA Coach/Mentor at the Fellow level (highest level). She was selected in January 2007 to complete the national training, which involved 50 hours of hands-on mentoring/coaching. DonnaMarie regards this training and practice as a deepening of her spiritual direction call, since it helped her acquire new skills to enhance her ministry.

Andy Kereky (ISI '07) who successfully completed his Doctor of Ministry degree at St. Mary Seminary and School of Theology, Wickliffe. Andy’s D. Min. project involved adapting the Spiritual Exercises for middle-school aged children, which he used in his ministry as a religious educator at St. Raphael Church, Bay Village and at St. Christopher Church, Rocky River. Andy’s achievement was documented in a substantial article in the *Universe Bulletin*, the newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, on 6/13/08.

Janet Lehane (ISI '06) who has recently become co-director of St. Ignatius High School’s Spirituality Program for Adults (SPA). She is assisting Jim Lewis, SJ in administering and directing the program, and will consequently have more time for her own ministry of spiritual direction.

Eileen Novotny (ISI '07) whose ministry of spiritual direction was recognized in a feature article in *The Youngstown Vindicator* (2/09/08). She was also asked to write an article describing her ministry as spiritual director for the Youngstown diocese’s newspaper, *The Exponent*. “What Does a Spiritual Director Do?” was published there on 3/07/08.

Ed Peck (ISI '06) who has recently become the founding Executive Director of the Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP) sponsored by the Heartland/Delta Jesuit universities. His principal focus is to develop and promote the program during its pilot phase and additionally to provide oversight for all other educational and formational programs sponsored by Heartland/Delta (currently the Magis National Faculty Retreat, Heartland/Delta Faculty Conversations, and the Heartland/Delta triennial gatherings). The ICP is a multi-faceted program designed for administrators in Jesuit colleges and universities who demonstrate potential and interest in furthering the university’s identity and charism.

When people give spiritual direction, conversation with directees sometimes raises unresolved issues in their own lives. If these issues are not addressed, the spiritual director's ability to help the directee may be compromised. During their time in the ISI internship, each student meets individually and monthly with a supervisor to process such issues. The main purpose of supervision is thus what is going on in the director as he/she tries to be present with the directee. The philosophy and model for such supervision are similar to those used in Clinical Pastoral Education.

A distinct issue is consultation, which focuses instead on specific techniques to help one's directees. Sometimes there is an overlap, whereby treating the director's issues can naturally open out into a discussion of how better to help one's directees. However, the focus of the supervisory process is always on the movements within the director during the direction session.

Once ISI students are certified, and leave the formal ISI training process, they are encouraged to engage in ongoing peer supervision, where they help one another process personal issues that arise in their spiritual direction ministry so that they may be of optimum help to those they direct. Since the first group of ISI students completed their certification in 2005, many have joined one of three peer supervision groups recently established in the Cleveland area. Presently, 63% of all ISI alumni participate in some kind of formal or informal peer supervision, which includes but is not limited to these three peer supervision groups. (See side bar on this page for these groups.)

At Dr. Nuth's invitation, Rosemarie Carfagna, OSU worked for a time with one such group on the West side, meeting at St. Ignatius High School. Maureen Conroy's book *Looking into the Well: Supervision for Spiritual Directors* provides the basic meeting format, although adaptations have been made to suit the group. This group has been in existence for about three years, and its members have helped encourage and mentor the formation of the other two groups.

Rita Carfagna (ISI '05) describes the group format thus: "We take turns presenting a case, and all of us prayerfully listen to that case and offer, in a grace-filled environment, insights and reflections. Hopefully we all take out of that something that helps each of us in our ministry. We help each other become better spiritual directors. We help each other learn how to listen." Janet Lehane (ISI '06) echoes that description: "One member acts as facilitator and timekeeper, while another shares a direction experience. We all ask clarifying questions and then offer the presenter our reflections on how the experience may be affecting him/her. Our goal is to affirm the director. Initially we struggled a bit with consulting on the directee's experience instead, but we have improved."



3 Peer Supervision Groups

East Side of Cleveland

A group of five meets in one member's home on Saturdays, more or less monthly. Inquiries should be directed to Patrick Cleary-Burns (ISI '06).

West Side of Cleveland

A group of six meets monthly at St. Ignatius High School on Thursday afternoons. Inquiries about this group may be directed to Rich Jerdonek (ISI '06) or Janet Lehane (ISI '06).

South Side of Cleveland

A group of five meets monthly. Direct inquiries to Harry Finkbone (ISI '06) or Marian Durkin (ISI '05).



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATE: Monday, February 2, 2009 is **Information Night** for those interested in attending the ISI beginning in Fall 2009. Please direct to us anyone you think would be a good ISI candidate.

Do you need a quiet place to get away from it all?

Try **Epiphany Hermitage: A Contemplative Oasis in the Marketplace** in the city of Akron, owned and operated by DonnaMarie Kaminsky (ISI'05). She describes Epiphany Hermitage as "a sacred space for all who seek the face and heart of God along life's journey. Rooted in the Catholic tradition, and inspired by the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Clare of Assisi and St. Ignatius of Loyola, Epiphany Hermitage welcomes people of all faiths . . . [and] provides opportunities for solitary prayer, individually directed retreats and spiritual direction." For more information, please contact poustinik2@yahoo.com or 330-835-9898.

Are you looking for a way to keep connected with colleagues? Opportunities abound!

1) Annual Day of Reunion and Reflection: An all-day Saturday workshop with lunch, designed for the continuing education of spiritual directors, open to all alumni, current students, and other interested participants. In November 2006, Sr. Karita Ivancic, SND presented the topic "Touching God: Explaining and Experiencing the Biblical Imagination." In November 2007 and April 2008, Sr. Maria Beesing, OP and Sr. Ann Walters, OP led two days of instruction on the Enneagram, and in October 2008, Matthew Williams, LPC of the Cornerstone of Hope, led a day's workshop entitled "Spiritual Direction and Bereavement Ministry: Connections and Practical Help." Watch for the announcement of future workshops.

2) Summer Reading Group: During the months of June and July, the Summer Reading Group meets on Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9 pm in the Reading Room of the Dolan Center at JCU. Again, invitees are ISI alumni, current students, and other interested participants, particularly possible ISI candidates. In summer 2007 we read and discussed Michael Gallagher's *Discernment: An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living* and, in 2008, his sequel, *Spiritual Consolation: An Ignatian Guide for the Greater Discernment of Spirits*. This group will continue this coming summer. Attendance is flexible and the atmosphere is relaxed. Watch for the announcement.

3) Celebration of the Feast of St. Ignatius: For the past two years we have celebrated in honor of St. Ignatius on the Tuesday closest to July 31, his actual feast day, with prayer and potluck. This too will continue and become tradition. The celebration this summer will be on July 28.

4) Opening Retreat Wine and Cheese Social: Last year, several alumni indicated an interest in joining the Saturday evening wine and cheese social which is held at the annual opening retreat. Several of them stayed overnight at the retreat house and/or joined us for the Sunday liturgy as well. We plan to offer this opportunity annually. Melinda Smith (ISI '07) offered to keep in touch with alumni and organize their participation. The dates for this coming year will be Saturday, August 29 and Sunday, August 30.

5) Annual Certification Ceremony: All alumni are always invited to attend the ISI certification ceremony to celebrate the new graduates and join us in a reception following the ceremony. This year's date: August 29, 2009.

6) Ignis Jr.—the ISI e-newsletter: The publication of *Ignis Jr.* has had a hiatus recently, due to the change in secretaries and the rearrangement of web software. But we are about ready to get it up and running again. This opportunity needs the help of its readership to submit information on people's current occupations, or lectures and workshops worthy of attendance, or good books to read.



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Megan & Mary

ABUNDANT THANKSGIVING is due to **three people** who worked very hard to create this special issue of *Ignis*: to **Megan Wilson**, who collected and compiled the survey data, conducted the interviews, and wrote up the short and long bios of the alumni; to **Mary Thompson**, who designed much of the original layout before she left the ISI in July 2008; and to **Barbara Ivec**, who persevered through many drafts to its completion.



Barbara

About the photos: Photographs of ISI people are from the ISI archives. Nature photographs are by Joan Nuth, taken on a walk around Shaker Lakes in late October when the trees were at their peak. They represent the beauty of this year's harvest time, and are a fitting backdrop to the spirit of joy which attends this issue.