

What is an individually directed retreat?

An individually directed retreat is a time of consistent and systematic prayer during which individuals share their prayer experience with a spiritual companion, who in turn assists them in their spiritual journey.

Where does one make such retreats?

Normally, retreatants come to a retreat house like Manresa, a place like the Scriptural desert. Here, withdrawn from the noise and preoccupations of daily life, they can be virtually alone with God, and allow themselves to center and grow quiet, and so listen more closely to what the Lord might say to them.

How is this different from other kinds of retreats?

Conference retreats, group retreats, or preached retreats are built around talks given to a group and aimed at the general situation of the group.

Private retreats are made by experienced retreatants on their own without a director.

Individually directed retreats are tailored by an experienced spiritual guide to suit the unique situation of the retreatant.

So it is a one-on-one retreat?

You could say that. Actually there are three parties who are involved.

- The first is the Lord, who desires to draw closer to us in a relationship of love, and who invites and inspires us for that purpose to come aside to a secluded place and rest a while (Mk 6:30-32).
- The second is the retreatant, a person seeking a more intimate relationship with the Lord and perhaps also to know God's will in some particular area of life.
- The third party is the director or spiritual companion who facilitates the journey.

What does the director do?

The director meets daily with retreatants, listens to and encourages them to give voice to their experience in prayer and to come to a deeper perception and understanding of that experience.

Together director and retreatant try to discover the movements of the Holy Spirit, to discern the direction God in which God seems to be leading the retreatant, and to choose for prayer Scripture passages that seem the most appropriate.

Manresa directors draw upon their own experience and their knowledge of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius to guide the retreatant. They are aware of the spirituality, dynamics, principles, and various prayers and meditations of the Exercises and can draw upon them to clarify for retreatants the unique personal journey that each retreatant is making.

What are the Spiritual Exercises?

St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, came to a knowledge of God and of God's will for himself through prayer and meditation, spiritual experiences and reflection on them. He made notes as he went along on his spiritual journey of whatever he thought could be useful in helping others.

Those notes developed into the book of the Spiritual Exercises, which sketches the general dynamics of the spiritual life that retreatants might experience, and a variety of considerations, rules and guidelines that the director could suggest to the retreatant as appropriate.

Are there requirements for making a retreat?

Retreatants need to have some experience in meditative prayer, comfort with silence, enough self-awareness to recognize their own inner movements, feelings, consolations and desolations, and enough openness and trust to share these experiences with their director.

What happens on a typical retreat day?

Retreatants may spend four or five hours of prayer each day. The number and length of prayer periods depend on the ability and needs of the individual. Retreatants take time to prepare for and reflect on each prayer period. They meet individually with the director.

The rest of the day may be spent relaxing or in activities that may deepen their awareness of God, like journaling, reading, listening to music, exercise, walking or other forms of prayer including the Eucharist.

How long is a directed retreat?

Retreats at Manresa are normally 5 to 8 days long. We recommend a minimum of at least three full days to slow down and get into the silence. The full Spiritual Exercises take about 30 days.

What can I expect from a 30-day retreat?

A thirty-day retreat is not a panacea to cure all spiritual ills, resolve doubts of faith or bring about mystical experiences. Nor is it a spiritual Mount Everest, a challenge to be met that proves one's abilities or determination.

Rather it is an opportunity for significant growth in the spiritual life and in knowledge of oneself, of God, and of God's will.

Are the requirements the same?

From those who wish to make a thirty-day retreat under our auspices Manresa expects:

- A prior individually-directed Ignatian retreat seven or eight days in length,
- Daily substantial meditative prayer,
- Spiritual direction for a year or so,
- A brief spiritual autobiography,
- Recommendations from persons who know the Spiritual Exercises as well as the retreatant.

Why do you ask these things?

It is important that those who undertake a retreat of this magnitude should be ready for and committed to the undertaking, since it is a major investment of time and energy on the part of both the retreatant and director. It should grow out of experience with shorter retreats and regular prayer and direction.

We wish to be assured by knowledgeable and spiritual persons that candidates for this retreat can do the Exercises and that it is the right time in their spiritual growth for them best to profit from the experience.

We hope that a spiritual director who is familiar with both the candidates and the Spiritual Exercises will be able to confirm for the retreatant and for us that it is time for them to take this step.

If there is any significant doubt about a person's readiness we recommend putting off the retreat until later.

When can I make a directed retreat at Manresa?

We set aside four eight-day sessions each summer in June and July for those who wish to make retreats of up to eight days. There is also a session from mid-June to mid-July specifically for thirty-day retreatants. These are times of special silence at Manresa, when outside directors join us, and when one can find support in the company of others engaged in the same undertaking. The dates can be found on our web site or by contacting Manresa.

If these dates are not convenient we will try to accommodate you at another time if we have the room and an appropriate director who can be available on the dates you choose.

What if I cannot get away for 30 days?

St. Ignatius foresaw that some people would be ready for the full Exercises but unable to get away. He provided a way, *The Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life*, to make this retreat at home with the guidance of a

director. It involves a daily commitment to an hour of prayer and reflection and a weekly meeting with the director for about eight months.

How much does a retreat cost?

A retreat at the retreat house costs \$70 a day, which includes room and meals and a stipend for the director. The *Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life* costs \$80 a month for 8 months.

How do I apply for a directed retreat?

For retreats of up to 8 days, one may apply on line at our web site. For the full Exercises one should contact Fr. Fennessy (30-day retreat) or Lucia Dubois (*Exercises in Daily Life*) who send you an application and arrange for a director.

How do I get to Manresa?

Manresa with its thirty-nine wooded acres bordering a tributary of the Rouge River is located just sixteen miles north of the center of Detroit. It is on the northwest corner of Woodward and Quarton (16 Mile Road) and can be reached via Big Beaver Road from Interstate 75 to the east, or via E. Quarton Road from Telegraph Road to the west.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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MANRESA
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