



# JESUITS

Central and Southern

Winter 2023

*Querida Amazonia:*  
Save the Amazon, Save the Planet



Dear Friends in the Lord,  
Peace of Christ!

“Father, where is your parish?”

It’s a question asked of many Jesuit priests, and it is a fair question coming from those unfamiliar with the Society of Jesus and its mission.

Yes, the Society maintains a commitment to a small number of parishes, but since its inception it has been called to other ministries, particularly those on frontiers. As Pope Benedict XVI reminded the Jesuits attending the 35th General Congregation in 2007, “the Church needs you, counts on you, and continues to turn to you with confidence, particularly to reach the geographical and spiritual places where others do not reach or find it difficult to reach.”

Pope Benedict went on to implore us to remain on the frontiers of science and faith as we “encounter the most diverse kinds of people wherever they are.” This is a tall task and one that leads Jesuits to engage complex and emerging questions across different cultures; yet, Jesuits have by and large succeeded in this task by engaging in sincere dialog with others – other people, other cultures, other beliefs. We have not always done this well, and certainly mistakes have been made, but, overall, the Society of Jesus has served the Church and the faith well by standing on the frontiers.

In this issue you will learn about two UCS Jesuits serving on frontiers. Father David Romero, SJ, is the provincial’s delegate to the Amazonia Region of the Brazilian Province, a fragile ecosystem and an area of tremendous importance for our planet. Father Jonathan Harmon, SJ, is missioned to a different frontier as he continues the long history of Jesuits and the Arts by exploring the intersection of art and modern technology.

I am grateful that God continues to call men to serve in the Society and on the frontiers, and I hope you are, too!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas P. Greene, SJ". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas P. Greene, SJ  
Provincial

Amigos,  
¡La Paz del Señor!

“Padre, ¿en dónde está su parroquia”

Es una pregunta que se hace a muchos sacerdotes jesuitas, y es una pregunta justa viniendo de quienes no están familiarizados con la Compañía de Jesús y su misión. Sí, la Compañía mantiene un compromiso con un pequeño número de parroquias, pero desde sus inicios ha sido llamada a otros ministerios, particularmente los de frontera. Como recordó el Papa Benedicto XVI a los jesuitas que asistieron a la 35ª Congregación General en 2007, “la Iglesia os necesita, cuenta con vosotros y sigue dirigiéndose a vosotros con confianza, particularmente para llegar a los lugares geográficos y espirituales donde otros no llegan o les resulta difícil llegar.”

El Papa Benedicto continuó implorándonos que permanezcamos en las fronteras de la ciencia y la fe mientras “nos encontramos con los más diversos tipos de personas dondequiera que estén.” Se trata de una tarea de gran envergadura que lleva a los jesuitas a abordar cuestiones complejas y emergentes en diferentes culturas; sin embargo, los jesuitas en general han tenido éxito en esta tarea entablando un diálogo sincero con los demás: otras personas con otras culturas y otras creencias. No siempre lo hemos hecho bien, y ciertamente se han cometido errores, pero, en general, la Compañía de Jesús ha servido bien a la Iglesia y a la fe manteniéndose en las fronteras.

En este número conocerán a dos jesuitas de la Provincia USA Central y Meridional que sirven en las fronteras. El Padre David Romero, SJ, es el delegado provincial en la Región Amazónica de la Provincia de Brasil, un ecosistema frágil y una zona de enorme importancia para nuestro planeta. El Padre Jonathan Harmon, SJ, tiene una misión en una frontera diferente, ya que continúa la larga historia de los jesuitas y las artes mediante la exploración de la intersección del arte y la tecnología moderna.

Estoy agradecido de que Dios siga llamando a los hombres a servir en la Compañía y en las fronteras, ¡y espero que usted también lo esté!

En Cristo,

Thomas P. Greene, SJ  
Provincial



**Jesuits Central and Southern  
Volume X • Number 1  
Winter 2023**

*Jesuits* is published three times each year to highlight the mission and ministries of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province.

**Editorial Team**

Therese Fink Meyerhoff, Editor  
Tracy Gramm, Graphic Designer  
Ignatius Plato, Contributor

**Advancement Team**

Paula K. Parrish, CFRE  
*Chief Advancement Officer*  
UCSAdvancement@Jesuits.org

Lindsay Hartmann, CFRE  
*Major Gifts Officer*  
lhartmann@jesuits.org

Rosalie Tomeny  
*Major Gifts Officer*  
rtomeny@jesuits.org

**Contact Us**

For comments or questions about magazine content, contact the editor at [UCSCommunication@Jesuits.org](mailto:UCSCommunication@Jesuits.org).

To update your mailing preferences, visit [www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/no-magazine/](http://www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/no-magazine/) or email [UCSAdvancement@Jesuits.org](mailto:UCSAdvancement@Jesuits.org).

Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province  
4511 West Pine Boulevard  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108-2191  
314-361-7765  
[jesuitscentralsouthern.org](http://jesuitscentralsouthern.org)

Cover: The river is life in the Amazonia Region. Photo by Jean Barfrei from Pixabay.



CONTENT

4



8



22

- 2 | **Province News**
- 4 | **Finding God in All Things in the Amazon**
- 8 | **The Province's Commitment to the Church in Belize**
- 12 | **iPad Evangelism:**  
Fr. Jonathan Harmon, SJ, Connects with Others Using Digital Art
- 16 | **Q & A with the Staff at the Jesuit Archives & Research Center**
- 18 | **An Act of Love:**  
Mary and Bob Von Hoene's Legacy
- 20 | **Man in Formation**  
William McCormick, SJ
- 21 | **Man at Work**  
Fr. Jorge Ambert Rivera, SJ
- 22 | **From the Office of Ignatian Spirituality:**  
On Desolation
- 24 | **Moving from Jesuit Hall to St. Ignatius Hall**
- 25 | **In Memoriam**

## Jesuit Works Respond to Needs

Prior to the U.S. Supreme Court’s stay of Title 42, which limits immigration, migrants began massing in towns along the U.S.-Mexico border, hoping to enter the U.S. to begin new lives. Several works within the USA Central and Southern Province responded by providing housing, food, clothing and other necessities.

Sacred Heart Church, the Jesuit parish in El Paso, Texas, which has always been a welcoming and supportive place for immigrants, opened the parish gymnasium on Dec. 13, 2022, as an overnight shelter, *Casa del Sagrado Corazon*. Parishioners, volunteers and newly hired staff offer their time and care to the mainly Venezuelan asylum seekers as they await viable solutions to their predicaments.



Read a more complete story at [bit.ly/SacredHeartHouse](https://bit.ly/SacredHeartHouse).

Donations can be made in the envelope provided in this magazine or at [www.sacredheartelpaso.org](http://www.sacredheartelpaso.org). (Choose “Migrant Fund – Casa del Sagrado Corazon” under the donate tab.)



## Senior Jesuits Move to St. Ignatius Hall

January 2023 was the end of an era for Jesuits in the USA Central and Southern Province. The last 66 Jesuits moved from Jesuit Hall near Saint Louis University to the new St. Ignatius Hall in North St. Louis County. They joined an existing retirement community, one which can provide the skilled nursing care some of the Jesuits require. Space was added and one wing renovated at Garden Villas North to ensure it meets the physical, spiritual and community needs of senior Jesuits.

The Jesuits of the province are grateful for the contributions of friends who helped make this new community possible.

St. Ignatius Hall will be formally dedicated on March 19, 2023.



## Dr. Salvador D. Aceves Becomes Regis University President

Salvador D. Aceves, Ed.D., was sworn in as Regis University’s president on Jan. 1, 2023. He is the university’s first lay and first Latino president. He previously served the university as senior vice president and chief financial officer, beginning in 2014, after serving as an administrator and faculty member at other Jesuit universities.

He plans to embolden the university’s reputation by enhancing its tradition of Ignatian spirituality and education.



### Causes for Celebration

Aric M. Serrano, SJ, was ordained a deacon on Oct. 22, 2022, at the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland, Calif. Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, SJ, was the ordaining prelate.

The following Jesuits will be ordained to the priesthood on June 10, 2023, at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in New Orleans:



José R. Dueño Gorbea, SJ



William A. McCormick, SJ



W. Tucker Redding, SJ



Aric M. Serrano, SJ

# PROVINCE DAYS OF REFLECTION

The Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province will host three days of reflection this year.



### Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House

Lake Dallas, Texas

**Wednesday, March 15, 2023**

*Fr. Joseph Tetlow, SJ*



### Manresa House of Retreats

Convent, Louisiana

**Tuesday, May 2, 2023**

*Fr. Greg Waldrop, SJ*

and

**Wednesday, May 3, 2023**

*Fr. Ron Boudreaux, SJ*

Each day begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. and ends around 2:30 p.m. Breakfast and lunch are provided, and Mass will be celebrated.

These events are free, but space is limited, so please reserve your spot by visiting

**[bit.ly/DaysOfReflection2023](https://bit.ly/DaysOfReflection2023)**

or call (314) 758-7130.



# Father David Romero, SJ, Finds God in All Things in the Amazon

*By Therese Fink Meyerhoff*

**G**rowing up in southern Louisiana fostered in Fr. David Romero, SJ, a deep and abiding love for the outdoors and God's creation. The warm, humid temperatures, the rivers and generous expanses of undeveloped land prepared him for his current home in the Amazon. Based in Manaus, Brazil, he is the provincial's delegate for the Apostolic Preference of the Amazon – one of five regions within the Brazil Province of the Society of Jesus.

“The Amazon area is where I feel most at home,” he says. “South-central Louisiana has a particular rhythm of life that’s not too dissimilar to the Amazon region. Like in Louisiana, in Brazil we spend most of our time outdoors. We eat a lot of fresh fish, rice and beans. The whole lifestyle is geared to the warm, humid climate. I feel right at home.”

Father Romero was first assigned to Brazil for theology studies as a

Jesuit in formation. He fell in love. He has served in Brazil continuously since his ordination to the priesthood in 1991.

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, and the Jesuit province includes the entire country. That’s just over 400 Jesuits across more than 3 million square miles. So, the Brazilian provincial has delegates for critical areas: formation, elderly Jesuits and the Amazon region –



Father David Romero, SJ

Fr. Romero. His assignment is to accompany both the 45 Jesuits and the various Jesuit apostolates in the area.

Part of Fr. Romero’s job is to visit the ten Jesuit communities in the region on behalf of the provincial. His other responsibility is to promote the importance of the Amazon and the need for safeguarding it against anything that endangers it: illegal mining activities, farming practices that destroy the rainforest, illegal

lumbering and hydroelectric dams that produce energy but destroy the habitat. Those are just some of the activities that threaten the Amazon's ecosystem, a network important not only for Brazil and the continent, but the whole planet.

## The Amazonia's Importance to Us

The Amazon River journeys through nine countries — Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela — with about 60 percent in Brazil. But the Amazon's importance extends far beyond these nine countries. It impacts the life of the whole planet through its roles in the water cycle and the Earth's atmosphere.

The massive numbers of trees in the rainforest draw up water from the earth, then release it into the atmosphere, where trade winds move it across the continents.

Those same trees exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen, which helps to regulate temperatures, counteracting the greenhouse effect in the Earth's atmosphere.

These critical processes are interrupted by deforestation.

According to Greenpeace.org, over the past 40 years, the Brazilian Amazon has lost more than 18 percent of its rainforest — about the size of the state of California — to illegal logging, soy agriculture and cattle ranching.

Threats to the rainforest are threats to the entire planet.

Fortunately, many people are becoming conscious of the need to protect the Amazon and its amazing diversity of life. Brazil has been leading the way for ecological preservation. And the Jesuits of Brazil are part of the movement.

“The Jesuits are here in the Amazon region as a sign of the commitment of care assumed by the entire Jesuit

province for everything that represents this sacred territory as a gift from God to the world,” Fr. Romero says.

“Part of our presence here as an Apostolic team is to preserve the Amazon, to promote the common home. Part of my job is promoting the Amazon so that even people who don't live in this region come to value and recognize the importance of the Amazon and learn from the indigenous people how to live with nature, how to live with creation in a peaceful harmonious lifestyle.”

More than 400 different cultures of Indigenous peoples call the Amazon home. They have lived there for centuries, and their presence is not a threat to the ecosystem, as developed society is.

“The indigenous people are in harmony with nature,” Fr. Romero said. “They learned to cultivate this connectedness and this respect and realize we're called to care for all of creation.”

The indigenous people's respect for nature means they don't pollute the rivers. They don't overkill the animals they hunt for food. They rotate crops to avoid depleting the soil. They find the sacred in nature.

“They have this wisdom that's passed on from generation to generation,” Fr. Romero says. “They live in harmony with God's creation and have a deep, profound respect for it.”

Brazilian Jesuits work with the indigenous peoples in a variety of ways, including identifying other indigenous groups who want to remain outside society. These remote groups avoid contact with others to maintain the lifestyle their people have lived for generations and because they don't have immunity to many common diseases.



A group of Catholic laypersons, priests and religious sisters participate in a seminar on the Amazon region.

The Jesuits locate these remote people and work with other organizations to try to protect them.

“We want to respect their freedom and try to protect their separation,” Fr. Romero said. “That includes protecting the areas in which they live from illegal miners or lumber mills. It’s not the Lone Ranger approach, though. Instead, we share our resources, our experiences, our knowledge and work together with others against the threats.”

The Jesuits in ministry with Indigenous peoples are transformed by a worldview that is so different from the anthropocentrism common in the rest of society, but so close to the Jesuit ideal of finding God in all things. They learn to walk with the Indigenous people; they learn from them, learn to cultivate their sense of connection, their respect for creation.

## Sharing the Indigenous Worldview

In early 2020, then-provincial Fr. Ron Mercier asked Fathers Romero and Brian Christopher, SJ, to lead the province’s biannual retreat, with a focus on how the Universal Apostolic Preferences are being lived out in other countries. The COVID pandemic turned this retreat into a virtual experience, but it instigated a new way of looking at the *Spiritual Exercises* for Fr. Romero.

“I read a lot on eco-theology, and I was able to work this ecological dimension into the *Spiritual Exercises*,” he said.

He used Jesus’ parables on crops, seeds and water and found tremendous ecological connections. In the third week, when the *Exercises* focus on Christ’s passion, he pointed to how the planet and its most vulnerable



Father David Romero, SJ, (in gray) joins with local youth in Manaus, Brazil for a Eucharistic celebration.

creatures are suffering from exploitation, disrespect and abandonment.

“St. Ignatius’ First Principle and Foundation states that the human is created just like the rest of the created world. We begin there,” Fr. Romero said.

Since then, all the retreats he’s given have been ecological retreats – the *Spiritual Exercises* with an ecological dimension.

“In *Laudato Si*’ (Pope Francis’ encyclical), the phrase that’s repeated is ‘everything is connected,’” Fr. Romero said. “It’s one thing to think that, but it’s another thing to *feel* that. To really feel that we’re part of God’s creation, as well as the trees and the rivers and the fish and the animals and insects and the sun and the moon and the stars. It’s sort of a Mystic experience to sense this connection. To really feel, to experience this connection.”

## Synod of the Amazon

In October 2019, all eyes were on the Amazon during the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region. It was one step in Pope Francis’ agenda toward greater care for our Common Home.

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected pope in 2013. He released *Laudato Si*’ in 2015. In 2017, he convoked the Synod of the Amazon, with the intention of finding “new ways for the evangelization of that portion of the People of God, especially the indigenous, often forgotten and without a perspective of a good future, also for the cause of the crisis of the Amazonian Forest, lung of fundamental importance for our planet.”

After the Synod, the pope released *Querida Amazonia* in February 2020. This apostolic exhortation included his hopes:

- ▶ *I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced.*
- ▶ *I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways.*
- ▶ *I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests.*





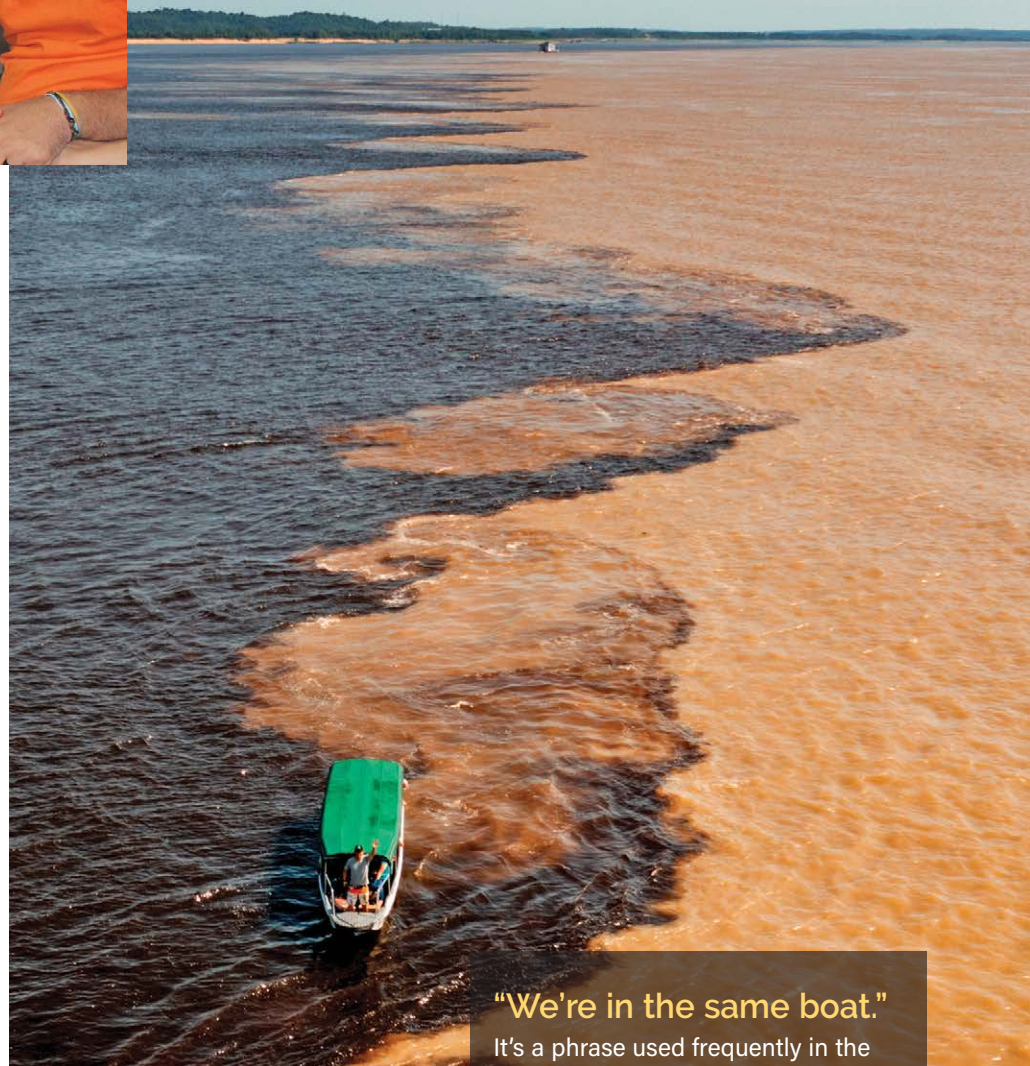
“Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love that God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us, in fond affection, with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.” (Laudato Si’, n. 13)

► *I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features.* (Querida Amazonia, ¶7)

Following the Synod, there was a sense of momentum in the Amazon, Fr. Romero said. “And then the pandemic came and all of a sudden, all of this interest in the Amazon sort of took second place to the health concerns.”

But Fr. Romero and the Jesuits of Brazil never lost their focus on the protection of the planet and the Indigenous peoples. Their mission is to “evangelize in the light of ‘integral ecology,’ defending and promoting the different forms of life according to the Ignatian charism in the essential aspects of the option for the poor and the care of the common home, having as a fundamental basis the promotion of faith and justice through the triple reconciliation with men, with creation and with God.” (<https://paamsj.org.br/>)

In addition to their work on behalf of Indigenous peoples and the planet, Jesuits in Brazil also have traditional ministries in schools, parishes, retreat centers and social ministries. They work with migrants, especially from



Meeting of the waters of the Rio Negro and Rio Solimoes Rivers.

Venezuela, which neighbors Brazil, to help with their resettlement. And they are investing in a school for solar energy where community leaders can learn how to use solar energy as a concrete step in caring for the common home.

### “We’re in the same boat.”

It’s a phrase used frequently in the Amazon region, where river travel is common. Father Romero uses that image at his retreats, reminding people, “If we don’t take care of this boat, this boat is gonna sink.”

On behalf of Fr. Romero, the Jesuits and our Common Home, we encourage you to learn more about the Amazon and how you can play a part in keeping this boat afloat.

# Two New Priests: The Province's Commitment to the Church in Belize

---

*By Therese Fink Meyerhoff*



*Last summer, the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province joyfully celebrated the priestly ordinations of four men. A little over a month later, two of those men arrived in the Central American country of Belize for their yearlong pastoral ministry assignment. Young priests are in high demand, so assigning two to Belize demonstrates a significant commitment by the province. The reasons behind this commitment become clear when one understands the needs of the Church in Belize.*



Parishioners pray before the Blessed Sacrament during a retreat in a Mayan village in Belize.

Located on the Caribbean coast of Central America, Belize is a nation blessed with natural beauty and a rich history, but economically poor by American standards. One challenge, from a Catholic perspective, is a dearth of priests. A scholastic of the USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province, Josh Hinchie, SJ, created a map of the province, showing the number of priests per thousand Catholics. Within the province boundaries, the greatest need by far is in Brownsville, Texas, where Fr. Provincial Thomas P. Greene assigned three priests last year, and Belize. There are only six diocesan priests serving the entire country. The UCS Province has 12 men, including eight priests, assigned to Belize. Among them are Fathers Thomas Croteau, SJ, and David Kiblinger, SJ, who were ordained in June 2022.

“Finding the right assignment for Jesuits is one of my favorite parts of the job,” said Fr. Greene, adding that

it’s a discernment process made in consultation with the Jesuit and the provincial’s consultors and assistants. “The pieces all have to come together. I consider not only their skill set and interests, but also the needs of the people of God and province resources.”

Assigning two new priests to Belize is a way to help the local Church and give Fathers Croteau and Kiblinger a unique formative experience.

“A year in the field, being immersed with the poor, will be good for them,” Fr. Greene said. “Both are pastoral by nature; both have hearts for the poor.”

### The Urban Parish: St. Martin de Porres

When Fr. David Kiblinger, SJ, arrived at St. Martin de Porres Parish in Belize City, Belize, Pastor Andrés Vall-Serra, SJ, had a page full of projects for him to take on. While there’s no such thing as a “typical” day,

Fr. Kiblinger reports that he’s begun to establish a rhythm of Masses, sick visits, funerals, teaching classes, office work and the not-to-be-underestimated ministry of presence to the people of the neighborhood.



The children of St. Martin de Porres School love Santa, aka Fr. David Kiblinger, SJ.

“It’s a great assignment for a pastoral year,” Fr. Kiblinger reports. “I’m preaching at least five times a week, if not daily, depending on whether there are weddings and funerals. As a deacon, I was on Sunday rotation every third week, so I had plenty of time to prepare. Here, I latch onto an idea, trust in the Spirit and go with it.”

St. Martin de Porres Parish is an anchor in Belize City, so much so that the area around it is referred to as St. Martin’s. It even appears on the sides of police vehicles patrolling the neighborhood. It is in the south of the city, where incomes are low and crime rates are high. Gangs wreak violence and anxiety – and an unfortunate number of funerals of young people.

“Trauma is endemic in the Martin’s area,” said Fr. Brian Christopher, SJ, superior of the Jesuits in Belize. “So many of our neighbors walk around carrying the deep wounds of violence, poverty and neglect. Our first job is to walk with them in such a way that they know that they are loved. Then the healing can begin.”

Father Kiblinger agrees. “This is certainly a place in the province where we’re really accompanying people who are in need, in need of healing – spiritually and physically – from the day-to-day stress that it takes to live here, to feed their children, to make a life for themselves,” he said.

In many ways, St. Martin’s is a typical Jesuit parish in that it brings a cross-section of people together, including many more affluent Belizeans who travel from all over the Belize City area.

“St. Martin’s is that place where people find life,” Fr. Kiblinger said. “I had a woman tell me that she comes to Martin’s on weekends to get her shot in the arm from our lively liturgy.”

He hopes the vibrancy of the parish will speak to young people, especially young men, so they can see alternatives to gang life. “I want to find ways to attract them that gives some direction and purpose to their lives,” he said.



## The Rainforest Parish: St. Peter Claver

Father Thomas Croteau, SJ, recalls a moment early in his vocation journey when he heard a priest talk about an island nation where one priest served the inhabitants of 50 far-flung islands. Each island had Mass only once a year. “As soon as I heard this, I thought, ‘Sign me up, ordain me and send me off. That way they’ll get Mass two times a year.’ That desire has remained – to serve where the need is great.”

In July, Fr. Croteau joined Jesuit Fathers Matt Ruhl and Sam Wilson at St. Peter Claver Parish in Punta Gorda, Belize, where the need is indeed great. The 160-year-old parish covers more than 1,700 square miles in the southern part of Belize and serves approximately 10,000 Catholics.

“The southern-most area of Belize is the most neglected part of the country, economically, educationally, politically and in terms of health-care,” Fr. Christopher said. “Yet the people here are sustained by their incredibly deep faith.”

With a population of just over 5,000 souls, Punta Gorda is the only town in the Toledo District of Belize. The rest of the area is tropical rainforests dotted with small villages. The parish serves 35 separate



Father David Kiblinger, SJ, offers the invocation at a signing ceremony between the Japanese ambassador to Belize and the mayor of Belize City in which the Japanese government promised to donate two trash compactors to the city.



Parishioners lead Fr. Thomas Croteau, SJ, during the Gaudete Sunday Mass at a Mayan village chapel in southern Belize.

villages, each with a small church and school. The Jesuits visit each village on rotation, making it to each only a few times each year.

“If the conditions are decent, you can get to the nearest village in about 45 minutes; it’s two and half hours to the farthest one,” Fr. Croteau says. However, since it’s a rainforest, and the roads aren’t paved, it’s rare that the driving conditions are “decent.”

Each village has one or more catechists who oversee the operations of the village church. They lead communion services on Sundays, preside at funerals, visit the sick and prepare people for sacraments.

Most of the villagers are subsistence farmers, who grow the same crops using the same techniques their ancestors have for hundreds of years. Most are descendants of Maya or Garifuna and speak Q’eqchi’ or Mopan at home. Masses are in their native language, which Fr. Croteau is still just beginning to learn.

“It’s a big deal when they get to have Mass,” Fr. Croteau says. “It’s beautiful. The people don’t hold back. When they sing, everybody’s singing. When they proclaim the word, they do it with all their heart. To be able to pray with the folks in the village churches on Sundays is a very beautiful experience.”



Fr. Thomas Croteau, SJ



Fr. David Kiblinger, SJ

Fathers Croteau and Kiblinger are flourishing in their assignments, and both are clearly being marked by the experience – fulfilling one of Fr. Greene’s wishes: “My hope for David and Thomas is that, in the best way possible, their hearts will be broken open, so that wherever they go, whatever they do as priests, they will never forget the needs of the poor.”

Both Fathers Croteau and Kiblinger extended invitations for others to join them in service to the Church of Belize.

“Persevering through formation to the priesthood has been a great gift for me,” Fr. Kiblinger said. “We need coworkers. I pray that the Lord sends more workers down here so we can continue and improve upon our impact here. It’s challenging. It’s stimulating. And it’s a good life.”



*St. Martin de Porres Parish and St. John’s College in Belize City were badly damaged by Hurricane Lisa on Nov. 2, 2022. If you are able to help with their recovery costs, please use the envelope in this magazine or donate on the province website at [www.JesuitsCentralSouthern.org](http://www.JesuitsCentralSouthern.org).*

# iPad Evangelism:



## Father Jonathan Harmon, SJ, Connects with Others Using Digital Art

*By Therese Fink Meyerhoff*

Father Jonathan Harmon, SJ, is choosing the path less traveled. On track to complete a Master of Fine Arts at the New York Academy of Arts in May, he hopes to use his considerable talents as a working artist. This ministry is certainly atypical in the recent Jesuit world, most frequently associated with education, spiritual ministries or social justice issues. But Fr. Harmon is part of a long tradition of Jesuits in the visual arts, one which began with St. Ignatius Loyola himself.

A ministry of the arts is not the only thing that sets Fr. Harmon's work apart. While his themes are often traditional, the art is created using a thoroughly modern medium: an iPad.

Prior to entering the Society of Jesus in 2008, Fr. Harmon earned a degree in graphic arts, but design simply doesn't speak to his expressive aesthetic.

"I am far more interested in the illustrative side of design using these tools to create art, rather than just to lay out newspapers and magazines," he said. "Funnily enough, I kind of gave all of that up when I entered, because I didn't think priests and Jesuits did that."

It was during his ministry experience at Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas that he "got the bug" to try digital art. The students all had iPads and Fr. Harmon sought ways to use them in his art classes. He quickly adopted the device as his primary artistic tool.

"Back when I first began working in digital art, there was a mindset that the computer was generating the art," Fr. Harmon said, clearly relieved that the genre has gained wider recognition. "It's really far more closely related to traditional applications. That's part of the reason I decided to study oil painting, because I recognize that I needed to have that foundation of how to move paint, how to combine paint, so that I could understand what's going on digitally."

The New York Academy is a figurative art school, leaning more toward classical training, traditional art practice and realistic images than the abstracts that have been popular over the past century.

"We learn a traditional approach so that we can engage in a contemporary art world," Fr. Harmon says. "I think that's a lot of what the church is trying to

do in a lot of ways: Make sure our tradition lines up with the things that people want."

It could be said that this has always been true, for the Church and for the Society of Jesus: Art is an evocative way to communicate, evangelize and teach.

"Early Jesuit art, first in Rome and Europe, then also in the missions, was part and parcel of their missionary activity," said Fr. Greg Waldrop, SJ, professor of art history at Loyola University New Orleans, whose doctoral work included study of Jesuit art in the late 16th century. He emphasizes that the arts have been an important part of Jesuit life from the beginning.

"I think it's important to note that Ignatius was someone who – like most people of his time – responded to images," Fr. Waldrop said. "Jesuit spirituality



Sacred Heart

2018 Digital iPad.  
Procreate



Madonna and Child

2018 Digital iPad. Procreate

Br. Giuseppe Castiglione, SJ, was an Italian missionary in China whose blend of Eastern and Western art styles helped foster communication in the Imperial Court.



This wrought-iron sculpture of the Sacred Heart was designed and fabricated in 1965 by Brother Burt Rivet, SJ, for the chapel at Jesuit High School in El Paso, Tex. When the school closed in 1972, the sculpture was moved to Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas, where Br. Rivet began the art department.

engages deeply with our emotions and experiences and their impact on our prayer. Images can help to conjure feelings to aid that process.”

During his lifetime, St. Ignatius Loyola even called on his right-hand man, Fr. Jeronimo Nadal, SJ, to commission religious images, specifically scenes from the Gospels that would correspond

to contemplation themes that appear in the Spiritual Exercises. “Since Ignatian contemplation is all about putting yourself in the scene, then Ignatius obviously appreciated how visual images could enrich that type of meditation,” Fr. Waldrop said.

Early Jesuit art also served to illustrate heroic virtues. In the Jesuit novitiates or the Catholic seminaries where Jesuits served as rectors, there were often images of martyrs “to get them used to the idea that they, too, might find themselves in a situation in the foreign missions or even in Protestant Europe where they could face death,” Fr. Waldrop said.

The late Jesuit historian Fr. John O’Malley, SJ, who published a thick volume, *The Jesuits and the Arts*, believed that within 150 years of its founding, the Society of Jesus had become one of the most prolific patrons and producers of the visual arts in the world. (*Ways of Proceeding: The Art of Three Contemporary Jesuits*, ImageJournal.com)

This support for the visual arts was eminently practical.

“Many of these Early Modern images were intended to instruct or persuade people, but also to encourage devotion,” Fr. Waldrop said. Images were used to tell Gospel stories, often to an illiterate or semi-literate audience, or to communicate across language barriers.

“One of the great things about a lot of religious imagery throughout the years is that it was often an attempt to bring art into people’s homes for personal devotions, so they didn’t have to go to the museum or to the cathedral or basilica,” Fr. Harmon said.

Digital prints, like those Fr. Harmon creates, are relatively inexpensive, making art more accessible – which makes it possible to communicate with new audiences, much like the early Jesuits did when they used early printed tracts or their crucifixes as teaching aids.

“It’s been very much on my mind recently,” Fr. Harmon said. “How can I create art that doesn’t just speak to the people who already believe the same thing that I believe? How can I use art to facilitate more of a dialogue between people?”

One important audience for Fr. Harmon are teens and young adults, especially those with no religious affiliation. “Young people certainly have always been a target audience for me, especially because so many young people these days are searching for beauty.”

Father Harmon finds inspiration in nature, his own devotions, his life experiences. When his mother died, for instance, he began painting a variety of images of Mary using his mother’s photo as reference. “It was a great, prayerful,





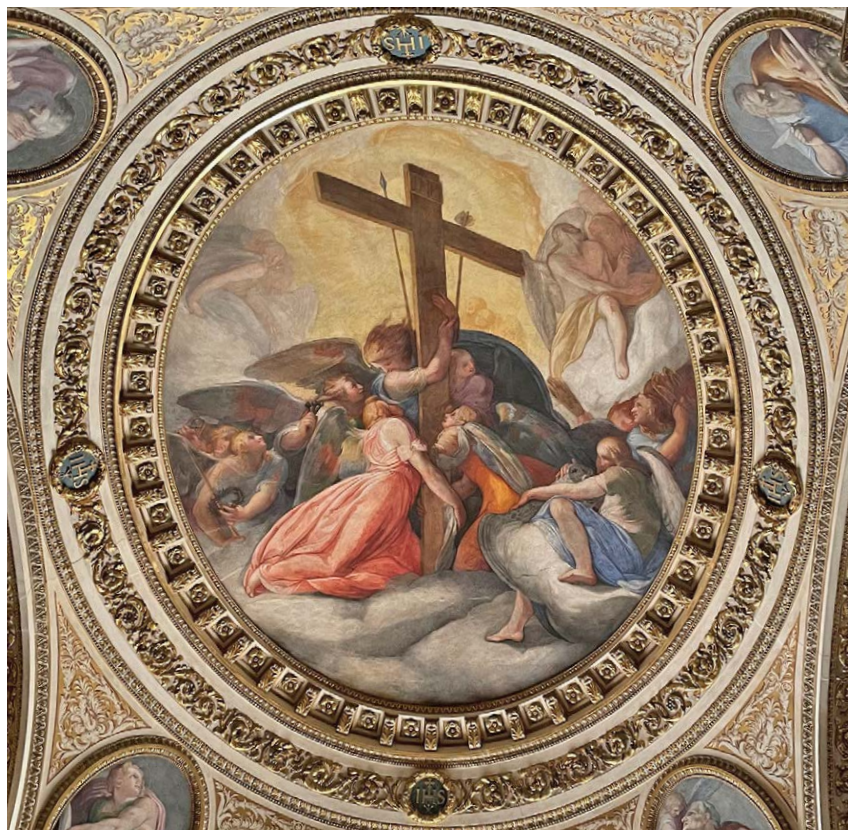
spiritual experience to be able to kind of join our Heavenly Mother with my earthly mother,” he said.

As one of the contemporary Jesuit artists in a long tradition, Fr. Harmon is also inspired by the Jesuit artists who came before him. These include the renowned artist/architect Br. Andrea Pozzo, best remembered for his remarkable *trompe l'oeil* frescoes, and Br. Giuseppe Castiglione, who served as an artist in the Chinese imperial court, as well as more recent Jesuit artists like Br. Burt Rivet, who founded the art department at Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas.

Surprisingly, two of his biggest inspirations are not visual artists.

“Tolkien and Flannery O’Connor are where I really go to for that kind of artistic flavor, inspiration ... excitement,” he said. “All of their works are deeply, deeply Catholic, but you don’t have to be a Catholic to enjoy them, to be inspired by them, to be moved by them. So that’s really what I aspire to. Ultimately, I want to be a working artist with a mission-oriented practice.”

This puts Jonathan Harmon right in line with the history of Jesuit artists whose work has served a practical purpose, said Fr. Waldrop: evangelization – bringing souls to God.



Father Jonathan Harmon, SJ, recounts seeing for the first time the ceiling fresco in the side chapel of the Gesù Church in Rome where Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, is buried: “It’s a really moving painting of these angels just gripping onto the cross like they’re being blown away, but the cross is the thing holding them firm. That image quickly became my favorite thing that I saw in Rome.”



Father Jonathan Harmon, SJ, finds inspiration in the Golden Age illustrators like Arthur Rackham. (Derek Hudson, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

# Jesuit Archives & Research Center Marks Fifth Anniversary

**F**ive years is the blink of an eye in the nearly 500-year life of the Society of Jesus. It feels like just yesterday that this magazine announced the opening of the Jesuit Archives & Research Center in St. Louis, but in fact, the JARC opened to the public in April 2018. Its five-year anniversary is an opportunity to revisit this unique work of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province.

In anticipation of the five-year anniversary, we spoke to Director David Miros, Reference Archivist Ann Knake and Collection Management Archivist Madeline R. McDermott.

## **Q. What do you remember most about moving into the new JARC?**

**Dave Miros (DM):** I remember the excitement and energy around starting something new, along with a sense of accomplishment and being part of something bigger than we are. Knowing that what we're doing will outlast us and will be here for future generations of archivists and researchers. We are stewards of the collections. I'm the custodian today, but this was a long-term commitment to the future of the Jesuits of the United States.

**Madeline R. McDermott (MM):** The week that we moved seemed like a never-ending parade of moving trucks. (It was around 16-18.)



**DM:** The logistics of moving everything that was in the old archives, plus the new additions from other provinces, took a tremendous amount of coordinating and planning. Every day was an adventure. You could try to predict what was going to happen that day, but you couldn't be sure. All the preparation and thinking that went into it was energizing, but it could also be exhausting. Some decisions were made over long periods, but others had to be made pretty fast. And then there were periods of waiting and wondering when the permit was going to come through.

## **Q. Is there such a thing as a “typical” day in the life of an archivist?**

**Ann Knake (AK):** My “normal day” would be answering reference requests and having researchers in, when I'll

be at the reference desk where I can answer questions and pull materials for them. Requests come in through our online form ([bit.ly/jarcreq](http://bit.ly/jarcreq)), by email or phone call.

**MM:** For a long time, I was focused on the transfer of materials – finding movers, deciding where things would go, a lot of packing and unpacking. Now I supervise our student workers and interns and process new additions. I also plan classes, along with Ann and Dave. We often do hands-on experiences for the classes.

**DM:** There's no such thing as a typical day. I've got a reference hat, a collections hat, a facilities hat. I'll consult with Ann on reference requests and Maddie on collection management. On any given day, I get requests that I divide into three categories: institutional, topical and personnel oriented. Then we figure out how to point the researcher to the

right resources. It can be very complicated to find an answer to a seemingly simple question.

**AK:** A lot of times a reference request will come in that doesn't have an obvious answer, so Dave will get on the phone to work it through with the researcher. He does a great job getting to the heart of what they really need.

### **Q. What's the most interesting project you've helped with?**

**MM:** We're really lucky having people doing really interesting work. It amazes me to see people making connections that I would never think of. And I'm so happy and eager to assist them. Even after five years, and knowing the collections as well as I do, it's cool to be presented with a question or information you've never thought of before.

**AK:** I am most satisfied when I can tell the researcher is satisfied – or is excited about what they're doing. So, I really enjoy working with the genealogist who's digging into the life of his great-uncle, who was a Jesuit, just as much as the historian who's going to be here for weeks on end, because that person who finds a photo of their great-uncle is going to be so excited to find it. That's so invigorating to be part of that and to see their excitement.

### **Q. Do you have a favorite artifact or document?**

**DM:** A 1968 audiotape of a Jesuit who was in Baghdad. He describes the experience of having to leave Baghdad when the Jesuits were expelled by Saddam Hussein. They

were there from the 1920s to 1968; they had dedicated their whole lives to that apostolate. To listen to his voice telling the story was really moving.

**AK:** One of my favorite items in the collection is the films we have from Camp De Smet in South Dakota, which was a summer camp for boys. We have a film of campers climbing on Mt. Rushmore before it was completed.

### **Q. How would a member of the public work with you?**

**Short answer:** Fill out the online form request as early as possible. The form is available at [bit.ly/jarcreq](https://bit.ly/jarcreq).

**AK:** I encourage them to go to [JesuitArchives.org](https://JesuitArchives.org) so they can see what's available online. We want people to reach out with their questions. I love digging into the research. But I want people to understand that we're fielding a lot of requests at any given

time. I really want to give everyone the most information possible. Sometimes I won't find it in the first few places I look, so it might take a few days to think about where else I can find it. We just want to be the best stewards we can be.

### **Q. What's next for the JARC?**

**MM:** We're hoping to grow our team with a digital archivist, expand our digital offerings and perhaps in 2024 bring back our student symposium. We're exploring options for a new content management system to make more of the collections available online – photos, documents, photos of objects.

**DM:** We want to be able to share materials efficiently and effectively beyond the physical space we're in now. We'll be looking at ways to make the collections more accessible.



L to R: David Miros, Ann Knake and Madeline McDermott.

# AN ACT OF LOVE:

## Mary and Bob Von Hoene's Legacy

By Rosalie Tomeny

**I**gnatian Heritage Society member Bob Von Hoene recognizes what's important in life and doesn't hesitate to act – as exemplified by his proposal of marriage after less than a week of courting Mary, the woman who would become his wife, and by his and Mary's decision to invest in Jesuit causes throughout their lives. Bob lost his beloved Mary in 2020, but he continues his gifts to the Jesuits as one way to honor her. It was Mary who introduced Bob to the Society of Jesus.

In a beautiful twist of fate, both Bob and Mary were born in Saint Mary's Hospital in Passaic, N.J., but grew up in separate New Jersey communities. Both attended Catholic schools, with Mary graduating from

Marquette University, while Bob went to the University of Dayton, a Marianist school. His law degree is from Seton Hall.

Bob Von Hoene's relationship with the Jesuits begins with his proposal to Mary on Christmas Day in 1976. As they began to plan their wedding and their life together, the couple did not have an established parish in either of their communities in Bergen County, N.J., just outside of New York City. However, Mary had a friendship with Fr. Robert Hart, SJ, one of her theology professors at Marquette.

When Mary was a student, Fr. Hart would come and say Mass at the apartment Mary shared with her housemates in Milwaukee, and they would all have dinner together afterward. Mary's love for Marquette and the Church broadened into a deep appreciation for the Jesuit mission. So, when she learned that Fr. Hart had been missioned to a Yale parish in nearby New Haven, Conn., she hoped he would preside at their wedding.

"We went to New Haven and arranged for Fr. Hart to marry us there a few weeks later in a very small family wedding," Von Hoene recalls.

Father Hart then drove back to New Jersey with the happy couple for a reception in a small supper club – right across the street from the hospital where they were both born. They had come full circle!

Fortunately for all, the friendship did not end with the wedding.

"Because we both enjoyed Fr. Hart's company so much, we traveled several times



Mary and Bob Von Hoene smile at a restaurant in Stowe, Vermont, where they spent many happy days skiing and golfing.



Bob Von Hoene

to New Haven on weekends to spend time with him and the other Jesuits,” said Von Hoene. “We were in a pleasant social environment, going to dinner together, attending jai alai games, or just being entertained by the priests with their guitars and singing. Mary and I really enjoyed seeing the social and fun-loving side of these very well educated and dedicated Jesuits.”

The Von Hoenes also embraced the spiritual side of the Jesuits with whom they socialized. They began to adopt some of the values of the Society of Jesus, including being men and women for others. Impressed by the Cristo Rey approach to education – in which low-income students work one day a week as a way to contribute to the cost of their education – the Von Hoenes made Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston one of the early beneficiaries of their generosity.

Those gifts later extended beyond the high school to include the Jesuit provinces that support Jesuit works by overseeing mission and providing training for Jesuits.

“Mary and I started making small donations to the Jesuits, both to the Central and Southern Province and to the Midwest Province a few years before Mary’s death in 2020,” Bob said.

“Mary specifically wanted to support both the novices and the elder priests, and when we made our wills in 2007, we left a sizable portion to both provinces, as well as to Marquette University’s Doctor of Physical Therapy Program,” Von Hoene said.

When Mary died, Bob wanted to honor his wife’s wishes and started donating to the provinces at a greater level. The Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province are particularly grateful to Bob for his recent generous gift for the construction of St. Ignatius Hall, the new retirement community in St. Louis.

Mr. Von Hoene is sponsoring the community’s Wellness Office in memory of both his beloved wife and her long-ago professor, Fr. Robert Hart, SJ, who introduced Bob and Mary to the Society of Jesus.

Bob Von Hoene reflected recently on why donating to the Jesuit province is important to him: “I had life-saving open-heart surgery in 2021, and I realize how fortunate I am to have survived. I look forward to continuing what Mary and I began. I am grateful for the influence the Jesuits had on Mary before we met and for their influence on both our lives.”

The Von Hoenes embraced the spiritual side of the Jesuits with whom they socialized. And they began to adopt some of the values of the Society of Jesus, including being men and women for others.

You, too, can show your appreciation for the Jesuits you’ve known and ensure their sustainability for the long-term.

CONSIDER LEAVING  
a PLANNED GIFT to the

Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province in

*your will.*



To learn about other options, call Chief Advancement Officer Paula K. Parrish, CFRE, for information: (314) 758-7126. Please leave a message.

# Bill McCormick, SJ

## The Pursuit of Depth (and the Ones that Help Us Pursue It)

By Ignatius Plato



**D**eacon Bill McCormick, SJ, strives to recognize every bit of God’s hand in his ongoing formation journey. As he will tell you, even the most ordinary things have left an impact during his formation; he still learns from his experiences every day.

“During college, formative experiences in and outside the classroom made me aware that our intellectual capacities are a great gift, and that those capacities are no little part of how humans do – or don’t! – get along in society,” McCormick says. He cites these insights as the beginnings of his love for political theory.

In a predominantly secular world, McCormick finds ways to seek God through the “pursuit of depth.”

“The call to depth is a task that never ends,” McCormick explains. “For me, it means embracing paradox: recognizing the truths in seemingly contradictory perceptions of reality, being able to live in deep tensions that we cannot resolve.”

He believes that the Cross stands as the only genuine resolution offered to mend these deep tensions. Endless pursuit of depth in the Paschal Mystery is at the heart of McCormick’s formation.

McCormick points especially to his regency at Saint Louis University as an affirmation of his sense of belonging in the Society.

“I loved teaching, and I was grateful to see the many intersections between the classroom and my research,” he recalls. “God approached me daily in my students, in my colleagues, in my community, and through them gave me wonderful confirmations that I was where I belonged – and still am where I belong!”

McCormick also remembers experiencing spiritual companionship as early as his novitiate through one of the members of the L’Arche Community where he lived for a time

as a novice. McCormick credits Wally as being the best example of God’s love that he can remember.

“Wally showed me every day how much God loved and cared for him, even unto death,” McCormick says. “I had always believed that God is love, but I had no real sense for the depths of that love until I saw how much God loved Wally. God is love, and God loves Wally. God loves me. God loves all of us.”



Most Rev. Terrence Prendergast, SJ, ordains Bill McCormick, SJ, a deacon, May 14, 2022.

Reflecting on the things he has learned and the people he has met inspires McCormick to embrace whatever mission God guides him toward next.

**“I’m blessed! Through no merit of my own, God has made me out of love, and God preserves me and welcomes me into His service out of love. I’m lucky, I’m blessed and I’m loved.”**

“I’m blessed!” he says with a laugh. “Through no merit of my own, God has made me out of love, and God preserves me and welcomes me into His service out of love. I’m lucky, I’m blessed and I’m loved.”

Bill McCormick, SJ, is in theology studies at Regis College (University of Toronto), and a deacon at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. A student of politics and religion, he is a contributing editor at *America Magazine*.



## Fr. Jorge Ambert, SJ The Priest who Helps Save Marriages

By Carlos Bracamonte

For nearly five decades, Fr. Jorge Ambert, SJ, has served God as a spiritual guide in a ministry that rescues marriages: *Renovación Conyugal* (Marriage Renewal).

Father Ambert was 13 years old when he decided to enter the interdiocesan seminary run by the Jesuits in Puerto Rico. Afterward, he entered the Jesuit novitiate at 17. Looking back, the octogenarian priest recalls the day when he sought out his father to grant permission to enter the Society of Jesus. The boy found his father working on a street. He was a determined man who, driven by poverty and love, worked hard to provide for his wife and six children.

"I will never forget that day," Fr. Ambert said. "I met my father and said to him, 'Dad, you know I want to be a priest,' and then he looked at me fixedly and silently, perhaps with resignation. I was the eldest of his sons,

I was the hope of my family to lift them out of poverty. But my father continued to look at me in silence then he said, 'If it is for God...' He took the paper and signed it."

Father Ambert's journey in the Catholic Church began when he was 11 years old and met a sacristan who went around the streets carrying a pew to teach catechism. "I sat in that pew and learned the Lord's Prayer with that man. Then I was an altar boy and that's how I decided to become a priest. I was intrigued by what the Jesuits did and that's how I fell in love."

In 1975, a young Jesuit priest arrived at *Casa Manresa* in Puerto Rico, with the idea of using the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius to help couples in their marriages. A year later, *Renovación Conyugal* was born, but the founding priest (Father Fernando) died in an accident. The couples who assisted

him created a group of laypeople who would continue the work. Father Ambert made the mission his own and became the spiritual guide.

*Renovación Conyugal* is a group of volunteer couples who share their experiences and knowledge with other couples so they can learn to communicate, get to know each other, and heal their relationships. It has conducted more than 500 workshops for couples of all faiths. During the program, they explore the presence of God in their marriage and their own human frailties in order to live the sacrament of marriage.

Today, brides and grooms about to get married also participate.

The program grew with the construction of a headquarters, *Casa Fernando*, in honor of its founder. Father Ambert continues to be its spiritual guide and marvels at the work God does through *Renovación Conyugal*. "I have met couples who, after getting divorced, participated in our workshops and decided to give themselves a second chance."

For his work, Fr. Ambert has received many awards, such as the *Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice Medal*, a papal decoration for those who have given exceptional service.

"Marriage is a vocation born of the heart, a conscious decision for life that needs specific preparation," says Pope Francis.

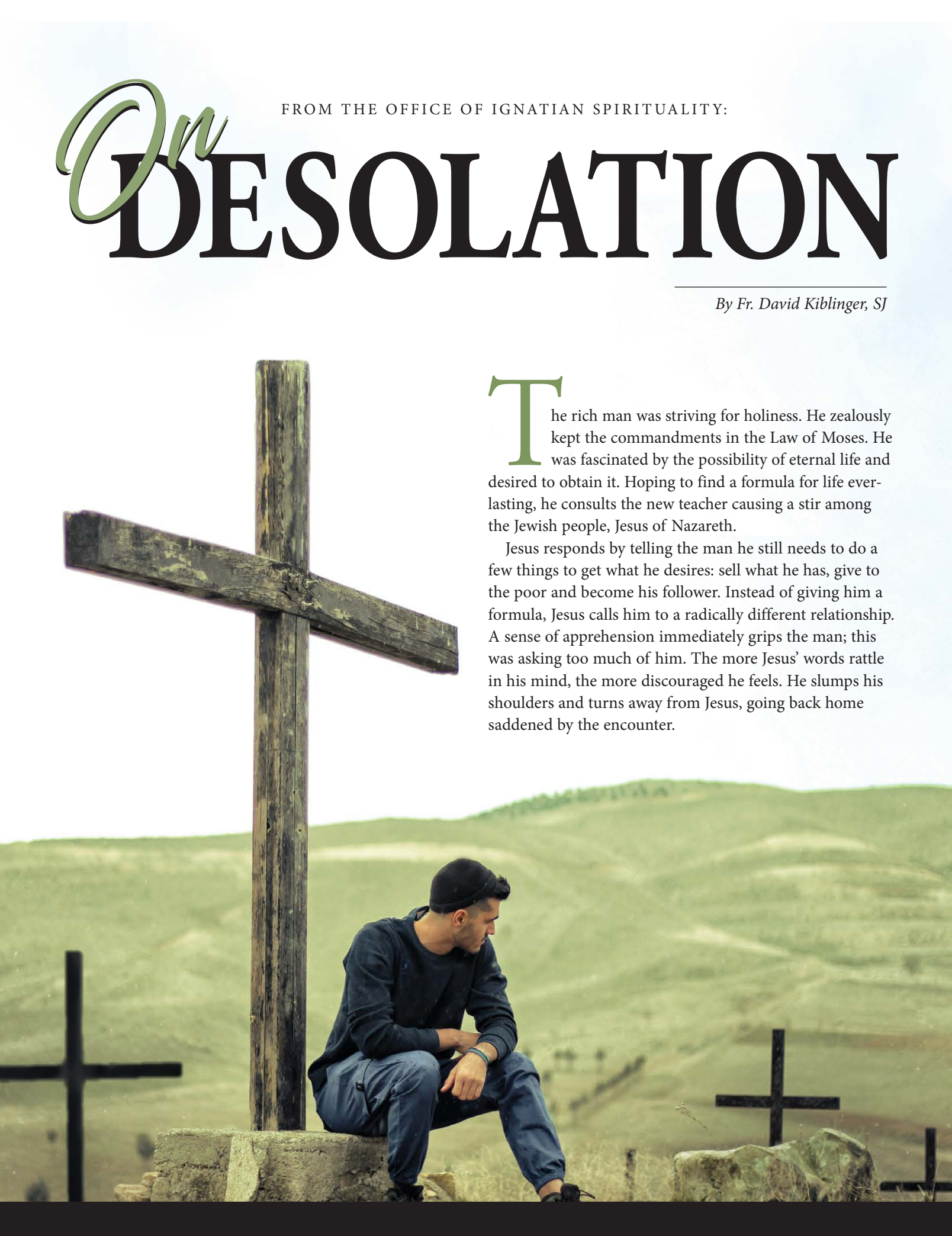
Father Ambert recognizes this truth and bases his support for married couples in his own deep faith in God's loving goodness.

*On*

FROM THE OFFICE OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY:

# DESOLATION

*By Fr. David Kiblinger, SJ*

A man in a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and blue pants is sitting on a stone base next to a large, weathered wooden cross. He is looking down and to the right. The background consists of rolling green hills under a clear sky. There are other smaller crosses visible in the distance.

**T**he rich man was striving for holiness. He zealously kept the commandments in the Law of Moses. He was fascinated by the possibility of eternal life and desired to obtain it. Hoping to find a formula for life everlasting, he consults the new teacher causing a stir among the Jewish people, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus responds by telling the man he still needs to do a few things to get what he desires: sell what he has, give to the poor and become his follower. Instead of giving him a formula, Jesus calls him to a radically different relationship. A sense of apprehension immediately grips the man; this was asking too much of him. The more Jesus' words rattle in his mind, the more discouraged he feels. He slumps his shoulders and turns away from Jesus, going back home saddened by the encounter.



The rich man's experience in this story from Mark, Chapter 10, illustrates what in Jesuit circles is called *desolation*. According to St. Ignatius of Loyola, desolation, along with its opposite, *consolation*, make up the two fundamental types of inner movements we encounter in the spiritual life.

St. Ignatius believes a main challenge for us is to recognize when we are experiencing either one of these movements. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, he defines consolation and desolation and gives us a set of rules to guide us in identifying when we experience them, in explaining why we undergo them, and in responding to them when they occur. These rules have proven to be extremely fruitful in directing people toward greater love and service of God and others ever since they were articulated almost five centuries ago.

To grasp what St. Ignatius means by desolation, we need to keep in mind his view of our interior life. Our consciousness is a stream of what he terms *interior motions*. These are the thoughts, feelings and attractions that pop in and out of consciousness as we go through our days. Some linger, while others are there only momentarily.

St. Ignatius believes there are three sources of these interior motions. One source is our very selves. Our unique personalities and the things that happen to us give rise to many of our thoughts, feelings and attractions. But some of them come from sources outside of ourselves. Both the good spirit and its enemy, the evil spirit, can provoke interior motions in us, too. Thus, our conscious life is made up of thoughts, feelings and attractions coming from ourselves, from the good spirit and from the evil spirit. With his rules, St. Ignatius helps us distinguish which of these sources is at the root of our interior motions so that we can see where the motions are leading us.

Desolation refers to those interior motions produced in us by the evil spirit. Included under the umbrella of desolation are things like gloominess of soul, confusion, disquiet, distrust, tepidity and sadness (*Spiritual Exercises* [317]). These are tools that the evil spirit uses to accomplish his purpose of drawing us away from loving God and neighbor.

Not all experiences of sadness or confusion are from the evil spirit, though. Some moments of sadness or confusion are simply natural to our human experience. For example, the grief that comes from losing a loved one is typically *not* the evil spirit acting on the bereaved. The type of desolation St. Ignatius is concerned with is *spiritual* desolation, the origin of which is the evil spirit and whose end is violence and death.

Every Christian is sure to experience times of desolation in life. The enemy of human nature, as St. Ignatius calls the evil spirit (*Spiritual Exercises* [325]), tries to do everything in his power to make a Christian deviate from the path to God. And if he cannot make a Christian deviate completely, he at least tries to slow down progress toward God.

Desolation is a powerful tool, especially when a Christian starts to take the spiritual life seriously. Facing the prospect of picking up the cross of Christ and following Him, with all the difficulties and sacrifices entailed, a Christian may be struck with self-doubt and fear. If a Christian falls back into an old sin, then discouragement and sadness threaten. After many years of service to Christ, a Christian may experience weariness or feel like their efforts are not making a difference. The temptation from desolation is to relax the search for God or give it up completely.

**It is a true grace when, by passing through desolation, our faith and hope in God are set on unshakeable foundations.**

The good news is that desolation cannot break us away from God by itself. It is not sinful, even though it tempts one to sin. St. Ignatius gives several strategies for dealing with desolation that a good spiritual director can explain. Most importantly, God never abandons us in times of desolation. The evil spirit inflicts it only because God allows him. Although we may be in desolation through our own fault and free choice, particularly when we neglect prayer and the sacraments, God also uses desolation as a means of spiritual training. God may test us to see how faithfully we persevere in the Christian life, especially when it is not easy. We may experience it to temper our own pride and comprehend interiorly our total reliance on God. It is a true grace when, by passing through desolation, our faith and hope in God are set on unshakeable foundations.

The rich man sought out Jesus because he wanted to live more faithfully and reach eternal life. When he heard what Jesus was asking him to do, he was thrust into desolation. The evil spirit threw up roadblocks to keep the man from deepening his life in Christ. We do not hear the end of the story, however. Can we hope that he eventually fought off the gloominess and despair and came back to follow Jesus? Jesus was surely waiting for him to return.

# Yet Another Journey into Yes

Moving from Jesuit Hall to St. Ignatius Hall

*In January 2023, 66 Jesuits made the move from Jesuit Hall, near the campus of Saint Louis University, to the new St. Ignatius Hall at Garden Villas North in St. Louis County. Father Michael Harter, SJ, shares this reflection on what the move means to the men.*



Every path unique  
No path the same  
All lead somewhere

**T**he best journeys are not trips to exotic places but inner movements that can deepen our response to an assignment and help us live more fully in the present moment. I call such a movement a “Journey into Yes.”

When a Jesuit pronounces his vows after completing the novitiate (the first stage of his initial formation), he takes a vow of obedience to accept whatever mission his provincial determines for him. Often a man receives an assignment to a school, parish or retreat house. Over the years, those missions have taken some of us all over the world to serve and collaborate with the people to whom we have been sent.

But there comes a time when we can be asked to step back, to move at a slower pace, to let others assist us in the challenges of daily living. Saying “yes” to that reality can be the most challenging assignment we have ever received. At such moments, we must be honest with ourselves and admit that we still have things to learn and attitudes to adjust as we age. Such a “Yes” can be transformative.

Many of us are now facing such a moment as we move into the new St. Ignatius Hall – a senior residential community that has been remodeled with a chapel, library, dining area and other spaces that will support our living together as a Jesuit community. Each man will have a bedroom, sitting room and personal bathroom. Additionally, each room will have a balcony or patio where the resident can take in the fresh air. Even with such comfortable accommodations, Jesuits can still find change and transition difficult.

The word “retire” does not enter into a Jesuit's customary thinking. We like to be engaged in teaching or helping others; but we are not particularly good at imagining what life in a slower lane could be like. While our legs might not be as steady as they once were, or our vision might be dim, or our hearing less acute, we might still be able to get to a nearby parish to celebrate Mass or hear confessions.

In our new home, we'll also be able to engage in spiritual conversations with other residents. Some of

us might be able to give talks in our academic specialty – or learn from the experiences of our new neighbors. Over and above such ministries, every Jesuit is given a mission: to pray for the Church and for our fellow Jesuits. It is a mission we take seriously.

Interestingly, many of us who are making the move to St. Ignatius Hall will be returning to a place just a little over five miles from the novitiate where we began our lives as Jesuits – a place we often referred to as “Dear Old Florissant” (occasionally said with a slight touch of sarcasm!).

A few years back when I had been missioned to Portland, Ore., I was walking through a neighborhood near the Japanese Garden, and I noticed a clever advertisement for a real estate company. The creative typography of a single word in the ad provided me with an insight into a Jesuit’s vow of obedience. That word was W(ere). It struck me that every “where” I have ever been sent, contains a “here” that I need to embrace. And every time I paid attention and made the most of my being t(ere), I received gifts I had not foreseen.

Often it takes time after we have moved on from an assignment we loved dearly before we can discover the gift our next assignment has to offer. In his poem *Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot says simply, “to make an end is to make a beginning.”

If we pay close attention to how we are being moved as we navigate a given moment, a graced insight could be waiting for us.

So what are we looking for as we move into our new home? Each of us will have a unique response to that question. But each response will be done in a spirit of gratitude for benefactors who make it possible for us to continue to live our religious commitment with fidelity and dignity.

Please pray that we can do so humbly, gracefully and gratefully ... as we continue to pray for you.

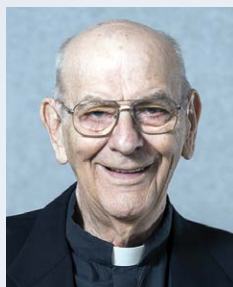
– Fr. Michael Harter, SJ

# IN MEMORIAM

*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,  
and no torment will ever touch them.*

*(Wisdom 3:1)*

## FATHER JOHN A. APEL, SJ



Father John A. Apel, SJ, died Jan. 1, 2023, in St. Louis. He was 85 years old, a Jesuit for 66 years and a priest for 53 years. He spent more than 20 years teaching at De Smet Jesuit and Rockhurst High Schools before serving in pastoral ministry for 12 years at St. Stephen’s Mission on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming. Following five years as pastoral assistant for the

Missouri Province and six years at Regis Jesuit High School in Denver, he returned to pastoral ministry with Native Americans, first at the St. Andrew Mission in Pendleton, Ore., then on the Spokane Indian and Umatilla Indian Reservations, in Spokane, Wash. As a member of the Jesuit Hall community at Saint Louis University, he began a self-described “ministry of walking around,” becoming popular with students, faculty and staff.

## FATHER STEPHEN CAMPBELL, SJ



Father Stephen F. Campbell, SJ, was one of the rare Jesuits who spent his entire priestly ministry in one place. He was missioned to Spring Hill College as a professor of Theater in 1991 and remained there until his death at the Jesuit Residence on campus on Jan. 7, 2023. During his years at Spring Hill, he also served as chair of the Visual and Performing

Arts Department and as rector of the Jesuit Community. Prior to his ordination, he taught French and theology at Jesuit High School in Tampa and directed plays for the Masque Club. He is remembered by his Jesuit brothers for his warmth and kindness. Father Campbell was 68 years old, a Jesuit for 48 years and a priest for 37 years.

**MORE**  
ON THE WEB

For complete obituaries, visit the province website:  
[JesuitsCentralSouthern.org/in-memorial](https://JesuitsCentralSouthern.org/in-memorial).

If you are no longer interested in receiving Jesuits magazine, please let us know. Contact [UCSAdvancement@Jesuits.org](mailto:UCSAdvancement@Jesuits.org) or 1-800-325-9924. Visit <https://www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/no-magazine/> to update your contact preferences.



## SOME PLANS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS.

- ✓ Go to grocery
- ✓ Schedule dentist appointment
- ✓ Make dinner reservations
- ✓ **ENSURE LEGACY**

Your good works can outlive you. By including the Jesuits in your will, you can help ensure the continuation of the Jesuits' spiritual and educational mission.

To learn more, please contact Chief Advancement Officer Paula Parrish, CFRE, at [ucsadvancement@jesuits.org](mailto:ucsadvancement@jesuits.org) or call **817.528.2298** and leave a brief message. She will return your call.

Then you can check one more item off your list.