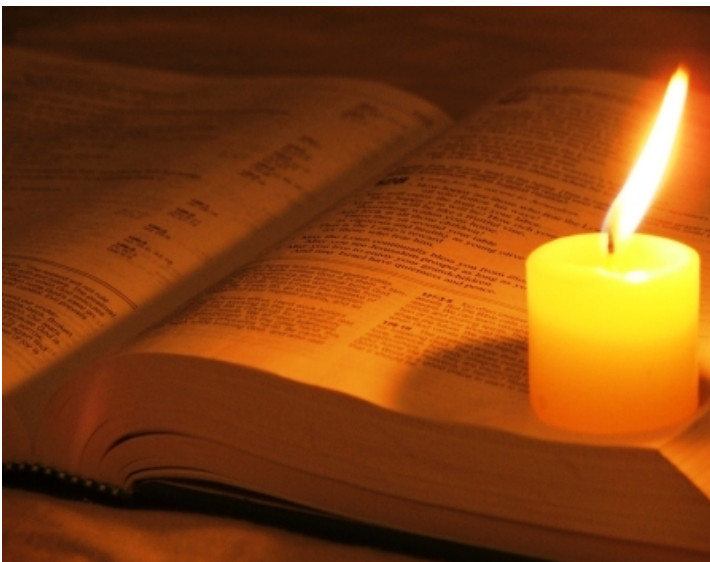


Giving the Exercises



The St. Simon Catholic Church &
St. Monica Catholic Community
offers a
Two-Year training program -2026-2028
in-person and by Zoom
to become a spiritual director able to offer
the Spiritual Exercises of
St. Ignatius of Loyola

The Spiritual Exercises



During the 1530s, St. Ignatius Loyola began writing about the emotions that took hold of him — feelings of gratitude and anguish, consolation and sadness — while encountering the scriptures. Those meditations eventually became the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*, first published in 1548.

The *Spiritual Exercises* is a compilation of meditations, prayers, and other contemplative practices. It is not like other classics in Western spirituality that are typically read from beginning to end. It is more like a handbook, especially for use by **spiritual directors** who accompany and guide people through this dynamic process of reflection.

Taken from Jesuit West Province; <https://www.jesuitswest.org/spirituality/the-spiritual-exercises/> February 2026.

Becoming a Spiritual Director of the Exercises

The St. Simon Spirituality Center offers a two-year intensive program for those interested in becoming spiritual directors able to offer the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Classes are one Saturday each month from 9am-4pm. Classes are to be taken both in-person and by Zoom.

First Year -Study – September 2026- May 2027

In the first year, focus is on the dynamics of the Exercises and the main principles of Ignatian prayer. Study is made especially of the 9-month version of the Exercises – often called the 19th Annotation, or the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL). Two short 3-page papers are required of each student.

Second Year – Study, Directing and Supervision – September 2027- May 2028

In the second year, students will take classes while they are also guiding others (1-3 retreatants) through the Exercises. Classes will meet one Saturday each month. Morning classes will focus on content in offering the Exercises, while afternoon classes will provide a group supervision experience. Further supervision is supported by monthly meetings with a supervisor (instructor) and written verbatims.

Classes 2026- 2027 (2nd Saturday)

September 12, 2026. Opening Retreat
 October 10
 November 14
 December 12
 January 9, 2027
 February 13
 March 13
 April 10 (day before Palm Sunday)
 May 8 – Closing Retreat

Classes and Supervision 2027-2028

September 11, 2027 Opening Retreat
 October 9
 November 13
 December 11
 January 8, 2028
 February 12
 March 11
 April 8
 (change in cycle due to Easter on April 9)
 May 13 Closing Retreat/ Graduation/
 Celebration Dinner

Instructors



Michael Cheney is an experienced Ignatian spiritual director and retreat director.

Michael has been involved in Ignatian spirituality and teaching for 40+ years. He taught theology at Jesuit High School in Sacramento and Loyola High School of Los Angeles as well as taught as an adjunct instructor at both Marymount College and Mt. St. Mary's College in Los Angeles part-time. He earned a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Spanish from St. Louis University, attended the Franciscan School of Theology at Berkeley for graduate theological studies, and completed his Master's degree in Religious Studies from Mt. St. Mary's University in Los Angeles.

Besides training spiritual directors, he worked with the diaconate program at the Diocese of Sacramento to guide permanent deacon candidates and spouses in Ignatian Spirituality. At St. Ignatius parish in Sacramento, he served as both co-Director and later as Director of the Center for Ignatian Spirituality.

He is now retired and enjoys traveling with his wife, grandparenting, and admiring God's beautiful world through birds & wildlife and landscape photography.



Jim Arena is an experienced giver of the Spiritual Exercises in the Ignatian tradition. In Spring 2016, he completed the Ignatian Spirituality Leadership pilot program (FIRE) at Holy Spirit Parish in San Jose. He went on to complete the 19th Annotation Retreat of the Spiritual Exercises in 2017 and in 2019 completed the "Giving the Spiritual Exercises" training through the Center for Ignatian Spirituality at St. Ignatius Parish, Sacramento. He also completed the 3-year Institute for Leadership in Ministry, a lay-leadership program, for the Catholic Diocese of San Jose. Jim leads the Giving the Exercises 2-year training program to grow future Ignatian Retreat Directors for the sister churches of St. Simon's Parish, Los Altos and St. Monica's Catholic Community, Santa Monica.

Besides training Spiritual Directors, Jim's background is in technology with an undergraduate degree in Industrial Engineering and graduate work in Large Scale Organizational Change. He led or consulted for years on many transformational programs for major technology companies in Silicon Valley. More recently, he has moved into Executive Coaching, working with leaders who are confronting difficult growth challenges for their organizations. This work led him to search for a deeper and more personal spirituality and as a result he merged Executive Coaching with Spiritual Direction with many clients. Jim enjoys companioning others who desire a deepening relationship with God.

He is married to Kathy with two adult children who teach him how to be their best dad. He loves to bicycle nearly anywhere. You may find him on a road near you.



Dan Brutocao has been the beneficiary of spiritual direction in the Ignatian tradition for 20 years, through the Spiritual Exercises 19th Annotation, traditional 30-day Silent Retreat, and other versions. In 2016 he joined other faculty members (Jim Arena and Dian Brutocao) on the leadership team for the first FIRE Spiritual Leadership program at Holy Spirit parish in San Jose, CA, then again with FIRE at St. Monica in Los Angeles. In 2019 he completed the 2 year Giving the Exercises training program at St. Ignatius parish in Sacramento and has served as a director in the Spiritual Exercises since that time. His faith journey has also been strongly influenced through his involvement in Parish Council, Parish School Board and eucharistic ministry. He loves to travel with Dian, experiencing Christ through pilgrimages to Turkey, Greece, Rome and the Camino de Santiago.

Since his retirement after 25 years as a pediatric critical care physician, he has continued to "find God in All Things", especially through marriage with Dian, and with their 5 children and 6 grandchildren. He enjoys golfing, running and is even occasionally able to find God through Notre Dame football!



Dian Brutocao is an experienced director of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. In her early years, Dian worked as an RN in intensive care. She has served on parish council at St. Peter's Church Spokane, WA, as well as president of such, the Catholic Foundation of Eastern WA, Vocations Admissions Advisory Board at Bishop White Seminary, Spokane, WA, and Grant Distribution Chairwoman for the Diocese of Spokane. She received a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies at Gonzaga University followed by a Master's of Theology with an emphasis in pastoral ministry at the University of Portland. Dian joined the leadership team for FIRE (an intensive Christian leadership formation program) at Holy Spirit Parish in San Jose, CA in 2016, and then FIRE St. Monica Parish in Los Angeles (a nine-month retreat in the Spiritual Exercises with concurrent communal discernment, 2020). Dian was a faculty member of the Giving the Exercises spiritual director certification program at St. Monica's Catholic Community from 2021-2023.

She has a thriving 44-year marriage with five grown children and six grandchildren. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, sewing, reading and playing golf.



John Stephen McCarthy is an experienced giver of the Spiritual Exercises in the Ignatian tradition, with a longstanding commitment to spiritual accompaniment and recovery ministry.

In Spring 2016, he completed the Ignatian Spirituality Leadership pilot program (FIRE) at his home parish, Holy Spirit Parish in San Jose. He went on to complete the 19th Annotation Retreat of the Spiritual Exercises in 2017 at El Retiro in Los Altos, and in 2019 completed the "Giving the Spiritual Exercises" training through the Center for Ignatian Spirituality at St. Ignatius Parish, Sacramento. Since 2019, John has accompanied eighteen individuals through the Spiritual Exercises. John has been deeply involved in recovery ministry since 2015, leading retreats for men in early recovery from addiction who have experienced homelessness through the Ignatian Spirituality Project. He currently serves as the organization's Men's Bay Area Coordinator. Since 2019, he has also volunteered and led an annual Men's Recovery Retreat at El Retiro, integrating the Spiritual Exercises with the Twelve Steps. He has been involved with the St. Monica's and St. Simon SEEL programs since their inception.

Now retired from a career in the semiconductor industry, John is married and the father of two adult children. He enjoys grandparenting, travel, and time spent exploring the natural world.



Karen Skidmore is a trained and experienced spiritual director, and giver of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. She has been deeply involved in Christian spiritual formation for over 30 years, previously as an ordained elder and teaching in church programs. She graduated from the Pierre Favre program of the Jesuit Retreat Center Los Altos in 2019. In addition, she has graduate-level Certificates from Fuller Theological Seminary (biblical studies), Renovaré Institute (Christian spiritual formation), Shalem Institute (contemplative spiritual guidance) and Boston College (Dynamics of the Exercises).

Karen resides in Charlottesville, VA where she is a member of Christ Episcopal Church and the leadership team for Charlottesville Area Spiritual Companions. An avid volunteer, she is a member of the governance and foundation boards for Virginia Public Media. Previously, she served as elder board chair for a large multi-site church in Menlo Park CA, board vice chair for a San Francisco nonprofit serving at-risk youth, and in board leadership roles for other nonprofits. Karen retired in 2019 as senior associate general counsel of a global investment management firm. She received a J.D. from Fordham Law School and a B.S. in Education from the University of Virginia.

Widowed young, Karen enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading and lifelong learning, travel and cultural activities, and of course, volunteering!



Suzette Sornborger serves as Pastoral Associate and Dean of Spirituality and Faith Formation at Saint Monica Preparatory School, where she works closely with the school community and the parish. She holds a Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology and has dedicated over 35 years of ministry service within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. In addition to her pastoral service, she is also an active special director within the community in particular with the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL).

Suzette is the author of a children's book ***How Do You See God? Seeing God in All Things*** and has contributed to Catholic media and formation, including writing ***The Billboard Campaign*** and developing the youth curriculum for ***The Dating Project*** through Family Theater Productions. Her ministry is rooted in a deep commitment to strengthening Catholic families across generations.

She and her husband have been married for 38 years and are blessed with 3 adult children and a daughter in law and son in law.

Fees and Prerequisites

Fees (There are scholarships if needed)

Year 1 Classes	9 Classes, 6 hours each	\$750
Year 2 Classes and Supervision	9 Classes, 3 hours each 9 Group Supervision, 3 hours each 9 Individual Supervision, 1 hour each	\$750

Graduation Certificate. A certificate of completion is given to all those who successfully attend all classes in the two-year program, complete the necessary paperwork, and successfully direct another person in the 19th Annotation retreat.

Prerequisites:

- Had an impactful experience of the Holy Spirit and grew in their personal mission as a result of completing the Spiritual Exercises.
- Discerning a vocational call to minister through the Spiritual Exercises
- Personal characteristics:
 - Thoughtful, exceptional listener
 - Protect confidences of others
 - Aware of their own wounds and how they are being healed by Christ.
- Other:
 - Currently receiving Spiritual Direction and have an active prayer life
 - 30 years old or more
 - Able to make the time commitment

Acceptance:

Following completion of the above prerequisites, applicants are informed of their acceptance into the two-year formation program by the first week of August.

Giving the Exercises of St. Ignatius
Two-Year Training course for Spiritual Directors
 Course Content and Reading Requirements
 First Year – September 2026- May 2027

General 3-hour Class Schedule

Content 1	50 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Content 2 (with questions)	50 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Prayer Experience based on Exercises	30 minutes
Shared Group Reaction to Prayer and class	30 minutes

First Year Attendance Policy: Attendance is expected for all classes and both the opening and closing retreat. The opening and closing retreat are in-person at St. Simon's. The other classes are on Zoom.

Year 1: Classes are from 9-12pm and 1:00-4:00pm, 2nd Saturday of each month

Date of Class	Thematic Content - AM	Thematic Content – PM
September 12, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening Retreat Personal Stories – Hopes and Expectations Overview of program Summary of the Exercises 	
October 10, 2026	<p>Ignatius of Loyola and Ignatian Spirituality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person and Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola General structures of Ignatian Spirituality 	<p>Disposition Weeks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom, Dispositions, Grace, Obstacles to entering the Exercises, Distinction of Counseling and direction Annotations #1-20 First Principle and Foundation
<p>Have read for October class: <i>Like the Lightning</i>, chapters 1, 2, 4 & Appendix 2 (185); <i>The Call to Discernment</i>, chapters 1 & 2; and <i>Spiritual Exercises #1-23</i>.</p>		
November 14, 2026	<p>Ignatian Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examen (versions) Forms of the Exercises (18,19,20) Meditation, Ignatian Contemplation, Colloquy, Review, Repetition, Application of Senses 	<p>Annotation 18-20; First Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust – images of God Review of Life – my response to grace Creation, Sin, Redemption

<p>Have read for November class: <i>Like the Lightning</i>, chapters 3, 5, 8, 9 & 10; <i>the Call to Discernment</i>, chapter 3–5 & 24-25; and <i>Spiritual Exercises #24-90</i>.</p>		
December 12, 2026	<p>Rules of Discernment of Spirits, First Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolation and Desolation, <i>Rules for First Week</i> • Reasons for Desolation • Spoiled, secret lover, general 	<p>Discernment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have I done for Christ? • What am I doing for Christ? • What will I do for Christ? • Guided Meditation
<p>Have read for December class: <i>Call to Discernment</i>, chapter 6; <i>Ignatian Discernment of Spirits</i>, Ideas 1-8; and <i>Spiritual Exercises #313-327</i>.</p> <p>Mid-Term Essay due (3 pages typed).</p>		
January 9, 2027	<p>Following Christ, Second Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding Christ in healing, forgiveness, wounded • <i>Call of the King, Two Standards</i>, • <i>Three Classes of Persons, degrees of humility</i> 	<p>Rules Discernment of Spirits – Second Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rules for the Second Week</i> • Characteristics of True Consolation • Angel of Light (deception) • Decisions after consolation – caution
<p>Have read for January class: <i>Like the Lightning</i>, chapters 11-12; <i>the Call to Discernment</i>, chapters 7 – 12; <i>Ignatian Discernment, Ideas 9-12</i> and; <i>SpEx 101-168 & 328-336</i>.</p>		
February 13, 2027	<p>Election</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Modes of Discerning God’s will • Reflection on emotions • Weighing Pros and Cons – reason • Confirmation 	<p>Third Week – The Passion of Christ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is Christ suffering in my life and world? • Compassion in my life and world • <i>Principles of Catholic Social Teaching</i>
<p>Have read for February class: <i>Like the Lightning</i>, chapter 13; <i>the Call to Discernment</i>, chapters 16 & 18-20; and <i>SpEx #169-189 & 190-209</i>.</p>		
March 13, 2027	<p>Fourth Week – The Resurrection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurrection Accounts • <i>Contemplation to Love as God Loves</i> • How is Christ coming to new life in me and the world? 	<p>Thinking with the Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thinking with the Church</i> • Fasting and Alms • <i>Suscipe Prayer</i> • Meditation on 4 areas of contemplating love
<p>Have read for March class: <i>Like the Lightning</i>, chapter 14; <i>the Call to Discernment</i>, chapters 21-23; and <i>SpEx #218-237, 210-217 & 337-370</i>.</p>		

April 10, 2027	Psychological Issues and Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projection and Self awareness • Dangers of the Director • Cultural/Ethnic and Special Perspectives (feminist, orientation, economic class) • Professional Boundaries 	Spiritual Companionship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Listening • Evocative questions • Role of feelings and emotions • Final reflections
Have read for April class: <i>Like the Lightning</i> , Appendix 1: The Ignatian Exercises, pp 163-183. Final Essay due (3 pages typed).		
May 8, 2027	End of Year Retreat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of a Directee • Resources to prepare as a director • Evaluation 	

Year 1 Required Texts:

Brackley, Dean SJ, *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times*, Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004.

Fleming, David SJ, *Like the Lightning: Dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises*, St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004.

Thibodeaux, Mark E., *Ignatian Discernment of Spirits for Spiritual Direction and Pastoral Care*, Loyola Press, 2020.

Choice between either version of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola.

Fleming, David SJ, *Draw Me into Your Friendship: the Spiritual Exercises – a Literal Translation & a Contemporary Reading*, St. Louis: Institute of Sources, 1996.

Ganss, George SJ, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary*. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992.

Course Content, Reading Material, Supervision Second Year – September 2027- May 2028

Year 2: Classes are from 9-12pm on the second Saturday of each month.

Monthly supervision sessions are by personal appointment.

Group supervision/mentoring is from 1-4pm every Saturday class session.

Date of Class	Thematic Content
September 11, 2027 Opening Retreat 9am-4pm	<p>Opening Retreat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Sharing • A map and overview of the Spiritual Exercises – Graces (Appendix 1 of <i>Like the Lightning</i>) • Review of goals and structure of Year 2 program • Verbatim and Supervision structures <p>Have read for September class: <i>Orientations for Spiritual Growth</i>, "Preparatory Phases: the Disposition Days", Chapters 1-4. "Prayer Units", Chapter 20 & "To You From Ignatius", Chapter 21. <i>Ignatian Adventure</i>: Pp 13-18, 23-29, 40, 47, 53, 61-62 & 65.</p>
October 9, 2027	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and dynamics, disposition of directee, Identify the grace of the First Week • Sin and guilt in the context of God's love • Principle & Foundation, Examen • Cases from Directees – verbatim <p>Have read for October class: <i>Orientations for Spiritual Growth</i>, "First Principle and Foundation", Chapters 5-6 & "First Week", Chapters 7-9. <i>Ignatian Adventure</i>: Pp 67-68, 71, 73, 75, 79-82, 94-95, 99-100, 101-102, 106-107 & 116.</p>
November 13, 2027	<p style="text-align: center;">Discernment of Spirits – Week I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules of the First Week • Consolation, Desolation, Tactics of the Evil Spirit • Cases from Directees – verbatim <p>Have read for November class: <i>Orientations for Spiritual Growth</i>, "Guidelines for Discerning Spirits", Chapter 29: Only the First Set of Rules for Discernment <i>Ignatian Discernment of Spirits</i>, Chapters 13-14, & 16. Accompanying someone through desolation, difficult consolation, and consolation.</p>

December 11, 2027	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and dynamics, Knowing and following Jesus. • Call of the King, 2 standards, 3 classes of persons, 3 degrees of humility • Election – making a good decision, Confirmation • Cases from Directees – verbatim <p>Have read for December class: <i>Orientations for Spiritual Growth</i>, "Second Week", Chapters 10-14; "The Kingdom Exercise and the Use of Myth in Spiritual Direction", Chapter 26 & "Decision-Making and the Five Steps", Chapter 27. <i>The Ignatian Adventure</i>: Pp. 133-134, 141, 143, 145-146, 147-148, 151, 157-158, 166-167, 172-173, 180, 187-188, 192, 200-201, 204-205, 207-212.</p>
January 8, 2028	<p style="text-align: center;">Discernment of Spirits – Week 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water falling upon a sponge/rock • Deception Under the Guise of the Good • Cases from Directees – verbatim <p>Have read for January class: <i>Orientations for Spiritual Growth</i>, "Second Set of Guidelines", Chapter 29. <i>Ignatian Discernment of Spirits</i>: Chapters 15 & 17. Accompanying someone through false consolation and consolation without previous cause.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st paper due – information will be provided.</p>
February 12, 2028	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion of Christ • Consolation – finding Christ in the poor • Cases from Directees – verbatim <p>Have read for February class: <i>Orientations for Spiritual Growth</i>, "Third Week", Chapters 15-17 & "Confirmation and the Process of Discerning Decisions", Chapter 28. <i>The Ignatian Adventure</i>: Pp. 220-221, 226, 231, 234.</p>
March 11, 2028	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurrection Accounts, experiencing the resurrection • Contemplation on Divine Love • Cases from Directees – verbatim <p>Have read for March class: <i>Orientations for Spiritual Growth</i>, "Fourth Week", Chapters 18-19. <i>The Ignatian Adventure</i>: Pp. 244-245, 248, 252-254, 260, 263.</p>

April 8, 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speakers • Concluding the Exercises • Special Cases, questions • Next steps for the Directee <p>2nd paper due – information will be provided.</p>
May 13, 2028 9-4pm Closing Retreat	<p style="text-align: center;">Closing Retreat with Directees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of stories • Invitation to draw others into the Exercises • 30 Day Retreat Opportunities • Dinner/social together

Year 2 - Required Texts

O' Brien, Kevin, SJ, *The Ignatian Adventure*, Revised and Updated, Chicago, Loyola Press, 2011

Thibodeaux, Mark SJ, *Ignatian Discernment of Spirits for Spiritual Direction and Pastoral Care*, Loyola Press, 2020.

Veltri, John, S.J., *Orientalions for Spiritual Growth - Vol 2: A and B.*

For Those Who Accompany Others on the Inward Journey,

Go to: http://www.julianmaddock.info/texts/veltri/o2/or2a_bintro.html

Note: This text is available through the class.

Veltri, John, S.J., *Orientalions for Spiritual Growth – Vol. 1 – Collections of Helps for Prayers.* 1993 (Retreat Center of Guelph, Ontario, Canada)

Privately published online by Julian Maddock –

Go to

http://orientations.jesuits.ca/veltri_orientations.html

or

<http://www.julianmaddock.info/texts/veltri/o1/veltri.htm>

Recommended Texts

Liebert, Elizabeth, SNJM and Paulin- Campbell, Annemarie

The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities

For Women, Second Edition, New York: Paulist Press, 2022.

English, John J., S.J., *Spiritual Freedom*, 2nd Ed., Chicago: Loyola Press, 1995.

Savary, Louis M, *The New Spiritual Exercises: In the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, New York: Paulist Press, 2011.

Contact

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