

ST. SIMON CATHOLIC PARISH & ST. MONICA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Giving the Exercises

Two-Year Formation Program for Ignatian Retreat Directors

2026 – 2028 | In-Person & Zoom
One Saturday per month, 9 AM – 4 PM

"Find God in All Things" — St. Ignatius of Loyola



AGENDA

01

What Are We Trying to Accomplish & Why?

02

Summary of Syllabus

03

Faculty Qualifications

04

Pre-Requisites

05

Application Requirements

06

Witness Talk

07

Q&A

What Are We Trying to Accomplish and Why?



A 500-Year Legacy

Since the 1530s, St. Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises have guided souls toward a deepening relationship with God — a living tradition still transforming lives today.



Companions on the Journey

We have seen the power of the Holy Spirit as we walk alongside retreatants as they encounter God through prayer, Scripture, and reflection.



Urgent Need in Our two Communities

St. Simon & St. Monica are commissioning a new generation of Ignatian Retreat Directors to expand this transformative ministry across our parishes and beyond.

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The Spiritual Exercises is a handbook especially for use by spiritual directors who accompany and guide people through this dynamic process of reflection.

— Jesuit West Province

Summary of Syllabus

YEAR 1 | Study (Sep 2026 – May 2027)

- Ignatius of Loyola & Ignatian Spirituality
- Ignatian Prayer: Examen, imaginative, Colloquy
- Rules of Discernment of Spirits
- The Four Weeks: Foundation → Jesus' ministry → Passion → Resurrection
- Election: Discerning God's Will
- Psychological Awareness & Spiritual Companionship
- 2 short written papers required
- 9 classes · 6 hrs each · Opening & Closing Retreats

YEAR 2 | Directing & Supervision (Sep 2027 – May 2028)

- Guide 1–3 retreatants through the full Exercises
- Weeks 1–4: Structure, dynamics & grace of each week
- Discernment of Spirits: Consolation, Desolation & Deception
- Election, Confirmation & Decision-Making
- Passion, Resurrection & Contemplation on Divine Love
- Monthly group & individual supervision sessions
- Written verbatim reflections and 2 short papers
- Graduation Retreat, Certificate & Celebration Dinner

Faculty Qualifications

Jim Arena

GTE Faculty Leader 2026-28 · St. Monica's GTE faculty member 2021-23 · Executive Coach and Management Consultant for 40 years

Dian Brutocao

M.Th. Pastoral Ministry · Member of Fire core team for Ignatian Spirituality 2016 · GTE certificate 2019 · St. Monica's GTE faculty member 2021-23

Dan Brutocao

Giving the Exercises certificate 2019 · Member of Fire core team, an accelerated experience of Ignatian Spirituality 2016 · Pediatric Physician (ret.)

Michael Cheney

40+ Years Ignatian Ministry · M.A. Religious Studies · Theology Faculty (Jesuit HS, Loyola HS) · Ignatian Spirituality co-Founder and Director, Sacramento

John S. McCarthy

Giving the Exercises certificate 2019 · Co-Leader, Men's Recovery Retreat, El Retiro · Community leader for Ignatian Retreat Directors in Western US

Karen Skidmore

Pierre Favre Certificate 2019 · Graduate training in biblical studies, dynamics of Spiritual Exercises, Spiritual formation and Spiritual Direction

Suzette Sornborger

M.A. Pastoral Theology · 35+ Years Archdiocese LA · GTE certificate 2023 · Currently Dean of Spirituality, St. Monica Prep

Pre-Requisites

Spiritual Foundation

- Had an impactful experience of the Holy Spirit through completing the Spiritual Exercises
- Grew in personal mission as a result of that experience
- Discerning a vocational call to minister through the Spiritual Exercises

Personal Characteristics

- Thoughtful and exceptional listener
- Able to protect the confidences of others
- Aware of their own wounds and how they are being healed by Christ

Practical Requirements

- Currently receiving Spiritual Direction with an active prayer life
- 30 years old or more
- Able to make the full two-year time commitment for all elements of instruction.

Completing these pre-requisites is a sign that God may be calling you into this ministry of accompaniment.

Application Requirements

www.stsimon.church/gte

1

Complete Pre-Requisites

- Ensure all pre-requisites (spiritual foundation, personal characteristics, and practical requirements) are met
- Discern calling in your prayer and with your Spiritual Director.

2

Submit Application

- Application elements include – your information, short biography and spiritual autobiography
- Two references (one from a Spiritual Director) and your photo.

3

Acceptance Notification

- Applicants are informed of their acceptance by the first week of August prior to the September start.
- We will conduct a rolling admission with interviews beginning as applications are submitted.

4

Program Enrollment

- Upon acceptance, confirm enrollment and pay the program fee (\$750/year).
- Scholarships are available, if needed.

Katie Hodsdon

Parishioner, St. James Catholic Church, Solana Beach

Graduated with GTE certificate 2023, has given Spiritual Exercises for 3 years

Q&A

"What are you looking for?" — John 1:38



Contact us: Jim Arena givingtheexercises@stsimon.org · Christine Gerety Christine@stmonica.net