

MOUNTAIN PIETA

Remember, Rejoice, Renew: 100 Years of Retreats at Mater Dolorosa

For 100 years, people have come to Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center seeking something deeper: **peace, prayer, and a renewed sense of God's presence.**

Since 1926, the Passionists—followers of St. Paul of the Cross—have welcomed retreatants to this sacred place in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Guided by the Passionist charism to “keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ,” they have faithfully offered generations of men and women an opportunity to step away from **daily demands and rediscover God's presence** in their lives. A Passionist retreat invites participants to remember God's faithful love revealed in the Passion of Christ, while standing in solidarity with those who are wounded, vulnerable, or searching for meaning.

Hospitality has always been at the heart of Mater Dolorosa. The Retreat Center has weathered economic hardships, earthquakes, wildfires, and changing times, yet its mission has never wavered. Through every challenge,



the Passionists and their lay partners have continued to provide a welcoming environment where individuals can rest, reflect, and experience spiritual renewal.

Today, Mater Dolorosa is more than a retreat center; it is a spiritual home where **lives are transformed** through prayer, community, and the enduring message of Christ's love. Rooted in a rich tradition yet open to the needs of the present, the ministry continues to flourish as it begins its second century.

To celebrate a century of retreat ministry, the retreat theme for this season is “**Remember, Rejoice, Renew**”:

- *Remember the graces we have received.*
- *Rejoice in the enduring love of Christ.*
- *Renew your spirit.*

Come on retreat!

MaterDolorosa.org/Calendar

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MATER DOLOROSA PASSIONIST RETREAT CENTER
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A Century of Preaching, Hospitality and Compassion



1926

The **first retreat** at Mater Dolorosa took place in **1926** under the "old rubber tree," a Moreton Bay Fig, which still stands on the property.

Mater Dolorosa became the **first** in Holy Cross Province to be constructed precisely for a retreat movement.

1932



A separate retreat center was built uphill from the monastery.

1950

Additional expansion took place in 1985.



An earthquake devastated the monastery, and it subsequently was demolished. In its place a beautiful **Monastery Memorial Gardens** was created in 1999.

1991



2025

The Eaton Fire damaged much of the buildings and grounds. However, the community responded with resilience and faith, rebuilding and renewing its commitment to serve.



Today, as we look back, we recognize how far we have come. We did not merely survive; we continued the journey with courage, resilience, and renewed trust in God. **We stand stronger and more hopeful than ever.**

2026



Century on the Hill A Taste of Mater Dolorosa



A special celebration of 100 years of retreats at Mater Dolorosa! "Century on the Hill: Remember, Rejoice, Renew!" will be Saturday, September 26. Attendees must be 21 or older.
MaterDolorosa.org/Harvest



Leaving the World Better: Jack and Fran Mercica's Legacy of Faith

For nearly 30 years, Jack and Fran Mercica have found **spiritual renewal, peace, and strength** at Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center. Originally from Queens, New York, they were introduced to retreats after moving to California.

Over the course of 28 years, Jack has attended about 25 silent retreats. "I look forward to it every year," he says. "It helps me get away from the world, **reflect on my purpose, and experience the Lord in a deeper way.**"

For the Mercicas, retreats are not an escape from life's challenges but an opportunity to face them with greater faith. Jack treasures the quiet atmosphere at Mater Dolorosa, where he can "**bare my soul, seek spiritual guidance, and know that God is with me through every trial.**"

Faith has guided every aspect of the couple's life. Their daughter serves as a Carmelite Sister and teacher in Colorado, while their son owns a successful automotive business and is raising two children nearby. Jack and Fran take great joy in supporting their family and celebrating milestones such as their grandson's Confirmation.

Longtime members of Mater Dolorosa's Century Club and Legacy Society, the Mercicas have committed to supporting Mater Dolorosa now and in the future.



As a retired financial advisor, **Jack believes strongly in stewardship and planned giving.** "I want to leave the world in a better place than it was when I came into it," he says. "**If everybody simply gave even one percent** through their estate plans, it would make an enormous difference for ministries like Mater Dolorosa."

Their generosity reflects a lifelong commitment to tithing. After moving to California in 1979 and facing financial challenges, they chose to continue giving faithfully. "We decided that before the utility company or anyone else got paid, we would give to the Church first," Jack recalls. "**And the Lord has blessed us ever since.**"

For Jack, legacy is about more than finances. "**You want to leave something behind that continues to do good,**" he says. "That's what Mater Dolorosa does. It brings people peace, closer to God, and helps them carry that into the world."

Learn more:

MaterDolorosa.org/Century-Club
MaterDolorosa.org/Planned-Gifts or
contact the **Development Office** at
DevOffice@MaterDolorosa.org.

A Special Update



One year after the Eaton Fire, Mater Dolorosa stands as a testament to resilience, faith, and community.



Significant progress has been made in rebuilding the office wing, restoring landscaping and infrastructure, and completing our solar project.



What once felt uncertain has become a journey of renewal, strengthened by the unwavering support of so many generous friends.



MATER DOLOROSA PASSIONIST RETREAT CENTER

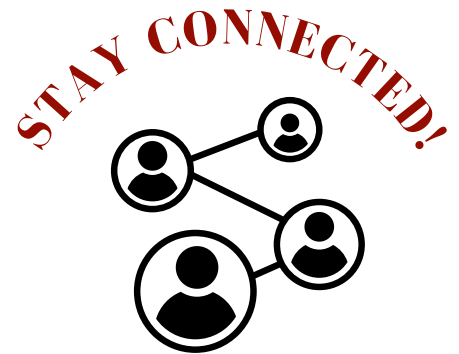
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