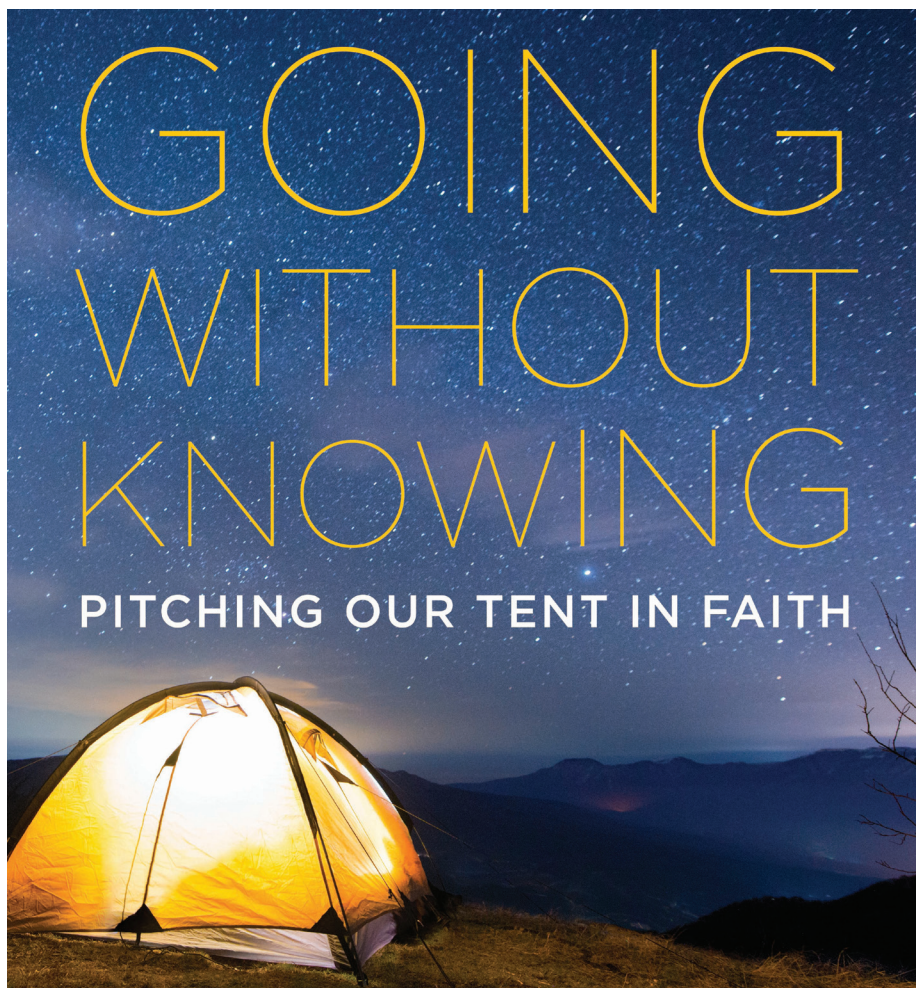




# Mountain Pieta

## Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center

Fall 2017



*What does faith mean for us? Is faith a noun? Is faith a set of doctrines or an institution? Does it mean a blind leap into the darkness? Catholic tradition says that authentic faith never demands the sacrifice of our intellect, our reason. What, then, is faith?*

Simply stated, faith is that moment of trust when we say “yes” to the invitation to enter a loving relationship with God – not a noun, but a person. God called Abraham into such a relationship.

“By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” (Heb 11:8)

Living by faith means accepting

God’s call to “go,” the divine summons, without knowing where it will lead.

“Going Without Knowing: Pitching Our Tent in Faith” is the theme of the 2017-18 retreat.

Faith, at times, may feel like a dance, a celebration. We’re at cruising speed and all is well. But there also are times when we hit a wall, a time of spiritual darkness and doubt. Such moments may be triggered by a major crisis, a death or divorce, a serious illness or traumatic experience.

In these winter moments, we can easily get stuck, afraid of working through those doubts and exploring new stages of faith. We may even become apathetic. We no longer want to heed God’s call “to go.”

How then do we nourish a faith that seems to be dying of thirst in the wilderness? How do we go without knowing? How do we live a focused and purposeful life of faith in season and out of season?

With Abraham and Sarah, we will explore and examine our own journey, the seasons and stages of our faith life. With Moses at the Burning Bush, we will share our personal stories of faith. With the Israelites, we will pitch our tents in the wilderness, learning how to travel light, letting go of our golden calf – the emotional and material baggage we cling to, yet holds us back. We will discover, or rediscover, what we need to do to nourish our faith.

“Go,” God says to us. Go and discover more deeply who God is and who we are. Go and enter into a more loving relationship with God. Like Abraham, we are summoned to go without knowing. Like the Israelites, we are challenged to pitch our tents in faith. It is called radical trust.

*Dear friends,*

The summer months offer all of us such a wonderful change of pace in our lives. Here at Mater Dolorosa, we don't have our regular Passionist weekend retreats during July and August because so many of our retreatants are away doing their best to spend extra quality time with their families and friends. Vacations, family visits, travel, more opportunities for beach and pool, barbecues and picnics and visits to museums and theme parks are just some of the summer activities that renew our spirits and enrich our lives. Our lives don't exactly slow down, but our focus and our energy are definitely put in a different place!

Of course, real life still has to go on, so it hasn't all been fun and relaxation! Every weekend, we have welcomed various special groups to come and spend some time in prayer and reflection. And come they do, searching for a deeper relationship with God and exploring creative ways to live their lives with greater passion and commitment. And for the first time this year, Mater Dolorosa has enjoyed hosting a series of Theology on Tap programs for young adults. On the four Wednesday evenings from July 12 through Aug. 2, 75 to 100 young adults have come together to discuss their faith and its place in their lives. The conversations have been serious, the food and refreshments delicious and the time together friendly and spirited. It's truly been a summer rich in faith and spiritual growth.

And, the summer is also the time for planning our new retreat program. Perhaps you are familiar with the hymn "We Walk by Faith, and Not by Sight"? In that hymn, we pray that God will help us with our unbelief, nourish us with a deep trust in His presence and help us always seek Him in our lives. So, this year we will be exploring our experience of faith and the many ways it challenges us and enriches our lives. We have entitled the retreat "Going Without Knowing: Pitching Our Tent in Faith." As we have worked on developing our understanding of the various ways faith enhances our lives, we have become more and more excited about the opportunity to explore our faith together with you. So, please

join us for retreat and look forward to a satisfying experience of God's presence in your life.

I do hope you, too, have been able to take advantage of these summer months to rest and enjoy your friends and family. Be assured that we here at Mater Dolorosa continue to remember you in our prayers and daily ask God to bless you and your family.

Father Mike Higgins, C.P.  
Retreat Director



## A PASSIONIST Retreat

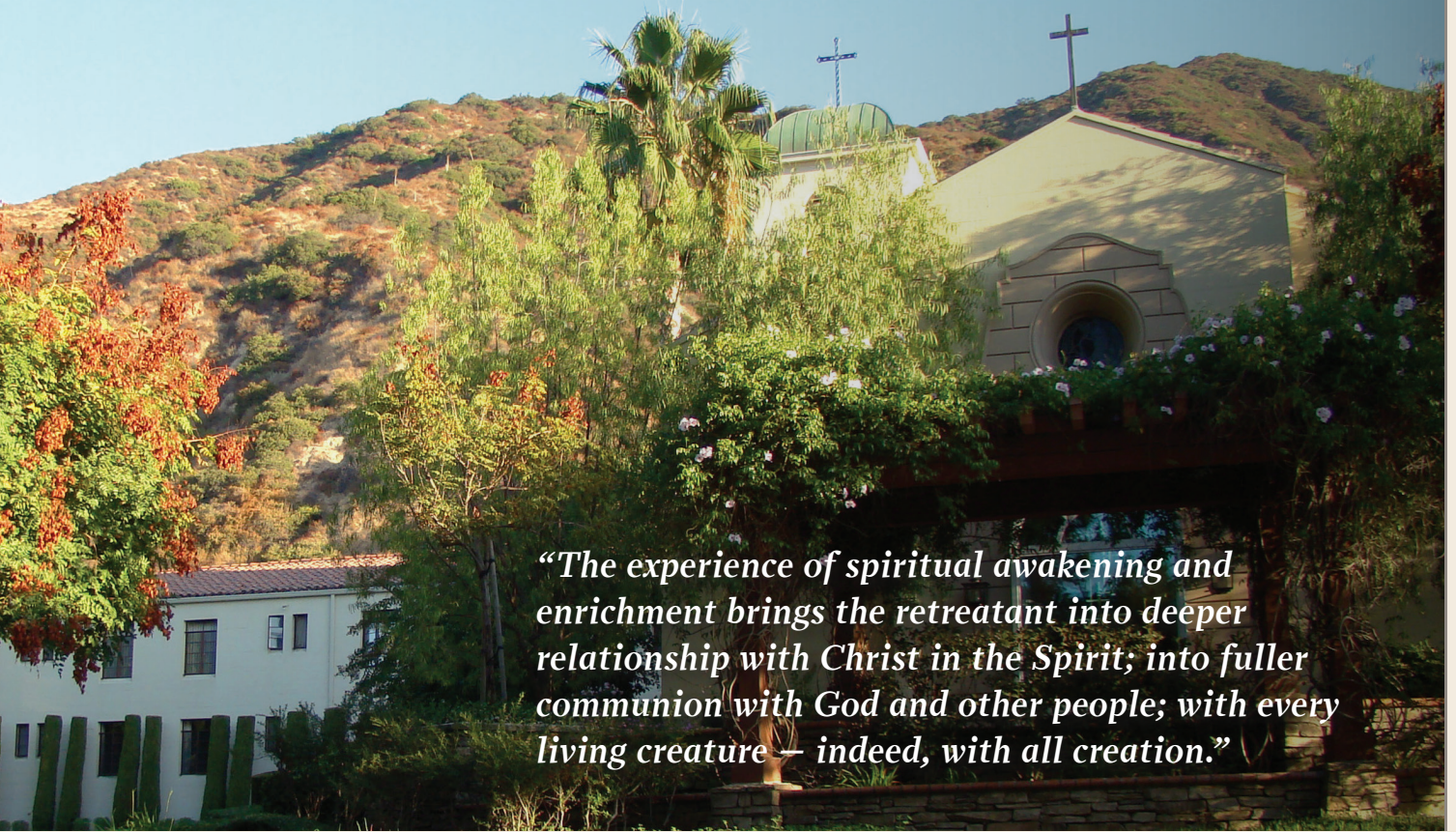
*Reflection by Dr. Michael Downey*

*In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed ... When Simon Peter and his companions ... found him, they said to him: Everyone is searching for you. (Mk 1:35)*

*Jesus stayed outside in remote places; yet people kept coming to him from all quarters. (MK 1:40)*

*"Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went out. He went away to a remote spot and remained there in prayer. But Simon and his companions went in search of him." (Mk 2:35)*





*“The experience of spiritual awakening and enrichment brings the retreatant into deeper relationship with Christ in the Spirit; into fuller communion with God and other people; with every living creature — indeed, with all creation.”*

From the beginning of his Gospel, Mark sets the pattern of Jesus’ life and ministry. He proclaims the good news in word and deed, goes apart to pray in remote places, then he is sought out by the people and so returns to an active life that leads to Calvary.

Those who follow in the way of Jesus are to do likewise. In Mark 6:30-31, the apostles rejoined Jesus and reported to him all their activities, all that they had done and taught. Then Jesus said to them: Come with me, by yourselves, to some remote place and rest a little.

This is the invitation we at Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center offer you.

These days, it is common to hear that co-workers and businesspeople go on retreat. Often they select a luxurious hotel with sumptuous meals and all the amenities. Their goal is to engage in discussion and assess how effective they are in reaching the aims of their team or corporation.

*The goals of a retreat at Mater Dolorosa are quite different:*

- To withdraw a while to a remote and quiet place
- To seek communion with God through quiet prayer
- To reflect on the word of God
- To ponder the mystery of Christ through reflections by the members of the Retreat Team
- To share in the sacramental life of the Church
- To surrender entirely in trust to God’s care and to the service of mercy and justice in the world

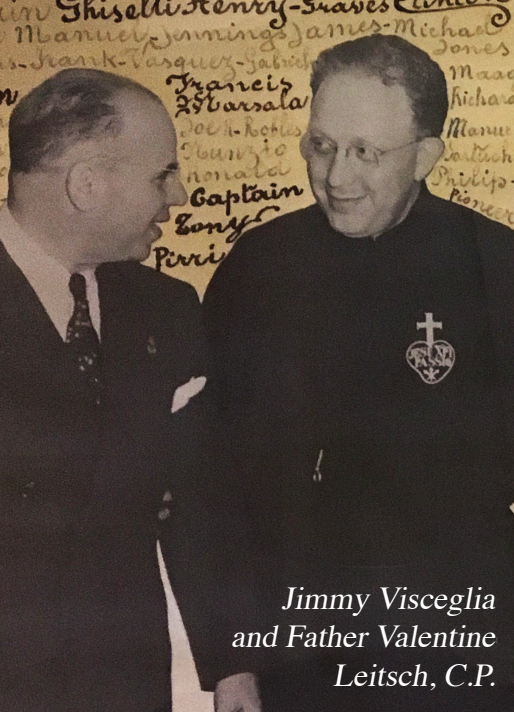
Thus, a retreat at Mater Dolorosa bears fruit long after the retreatant leaves the serene grounds of the Retreat House. The experience of spiritual awakening and enrichment brings the retreatant into deeper relationship with Christ in the Spirit; into fuller communion with God and other people; with every living creature — indeed, with all creation.

For a person of Christian faith, the surest way to this communion is to contemplate the mystery of Christ, Word made flesh, the Son who reveals God’s fatherhood and offers his life as a gift to the world. It is he who makes God’s presence known on earth from the first proclamation of the kingdom. For this, he has been sent in the power of the Spirit, to testify to the Father before the “powers” of the earth, and to surrender himself to the Father in his Passion and cross, so that others might have life and have it to the full.

In coming away to the quiet of Mater Dolorosa, the retreatant contemplates Christ now given sacramentally in memory of his Passion, death and resurrection, offered in words of blessing, compassion and forgiveness — and pondered in the Spirit working silently within one’s own heart and hearts of the other disciples on retreat.

Those who contemplate the mystery of Christ’s Passion, death, and resurrection on a silent retreat have to be conscious of the movement of the Spirit — first within their own hearts, and then in relationship with family, co-workers, the wider world and ultimately, with the God to whom we cling in love, hope and faith.



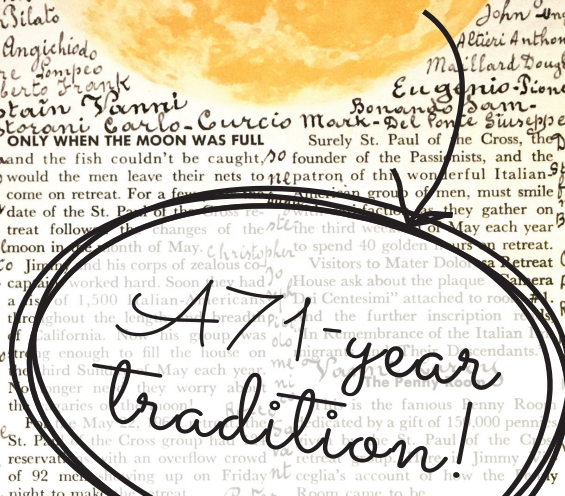


Jimmy Visceglia  
and Father Valentine  
Leitsch, C.P.



This 19th annual Italian-American retreat was held  
last May 22 with an overflow crowd of 92 men.

# RETREAT OF THE FULL MOON



**O**n a cool weekend in May 2017, 76 men traveled to Mater Dolorosa for the annual Italian Men's Retreat. They came to be renewed spiritually, and to celebrate family, community, heritage and a tradition that goes back 71 years.

Most of the men who attended those early retreats were fishermen from the coastal city of San Pedro. Only at full moon when the fish could not be caught would the men leave their nets to come on retreat. For years, the St. Paul of the Cross retreat took place during the full moon in May. From the small group of

fishermen, the list grew to more than 1,500 Italian-Americans from all over California. "The weekend is a time to grow spiritually," Tommy Vasile, president of the Italian Men's Retreat Group, said. Masses are celebrated in English and Italian. Retreat conferences are also offered in both languages.

"But this is also a time to celebrate our heritage," he added. "Friday night of the retreat, for example, is always calamari night. We look forward to that." Various retreatants donate the wines. Lino Cicone served as head chef during the weekend retreats for decades. He made certain all meals were Italian.





*Brothedr John Rockenbach, C.P. leads the Italian men on the Way of the Cross.*

Today, Tony Anthony DeGravina wears the chef's hat.

The Italian Men's Retreat was founded by Jimmy Visceglia in 1947. But his idea began several years earlier when he made his first retreat at Mater Dolorosa.

"He came away with a great desire," Vasile said, "to bring as many of his fellow Italian-American men as possible to a retreat here."

The first Italian Men's Retreat at Mater Dolorosa took place on Mothers' Day, May 11, 1947. Fifty-four men filled the Retreat House. The retreat house back then was half the size it is today; the new wing had not been built yet.

The retreat was called "*Ritiro Spirituale in Omaggio a San Paolo Della Croce*" – which translates to "Spiritual Retreat in Tribute to St. Paul of the Cross." This name was shortened to "The St. Paul of the Cross" retreat group. St. Paul of the Cross, the founder of the Passionists, became the patron saint of the Italian-American group.

The third Sunday in May, the weekend after Mothers' Day, was eventually established as the annual Italian Men's Retreat.

*John Tommy Visale, wearing blue shirt, standing, joins his table in a toast.*



*"The Italian Men's Retreat today has become one of the most successful traditions at Mater Dolorosa. And it all began with Jimmy Visceglia, a few San Pedro fishermen and a full moon."*

"When Jimmy retired as president," said Vasile, "he asked John Falbe, an Irishman, to take his place. This may seem odd," he noted, "but the Italian Men's Retreat welcomes all men who enjoy the Italian culture and food, no matter what their country of origin may be."

Pat Gabriele succeeded Falbe as president. In 1998, Vasile took over, serving seven years. He was followed by Joe Gammariello and later Joe Cici. But Vasile was asked to assume the leadership in 2016.

"There is one Retreat House room that is very special to us, room #1," said Vasile. "A plaque on its door reads '*Camera Dei Centesimi*' – the 'Penny Room.' It further reads: 'In remembrance of the Italian immigrants and their descendants.'"

Jimmy Visceglia recounts

the history of the Penny Room this way: "The Penny Room at Mater Dolorosa was paid for with the pennies to shut up those members of the group who were too free and easy with cuss words. Cussing is a tradition in certain parts of Italy and a habit easily acquired by the *paesani*."

On May 19, 1957, Jimmy and his committee presented Father Isidore O'Reilly, C.P., the retreat director, with 150,000 pennies.

"The consternation of the teller at the bank can be imagined," Jimmy said, "as Father Isidore drove up in his car with 30 sacks, each containing 5,000 pennies."

The Italian Men's Retreat today has become one of the most successful traditions at Mater Dolorosa. And it all began with Jimmy Visceglia, a few San Pedro fishermen and a full moon.



Thanks  
to one  
and all!

Thank you, Pat Wickhem, Claire and Jim  
Brewer. You are the best golf team!



Where did the ball go?

Mater Dolorosa's 11th annual Golf Tournament on May 22 was another amazing success under the chairmanship of Pat Wickhem and his team of Claire Brewer and Jim Brewer. The tournament revenue has reached new heights in the seven years Pat has been golf chair. This year's gross revenue is \$149,000, and the net will exceed \$107,000.

Mater Dolorosa has been blessed with Pat's awesome leadership in procuring sponsors, auction items and golfers. Claire's organizational

skills behind the scenes has been invaluable, while Jim's attention to detail with the numbers and planning with the golf course was impeccable.

We have also been blessed with the support of many friends and retreatants who support this important fundraiser. The Passionist

Community deeply appreciates Pat, Claire and Jim for their hours of dedication to the success of this event for the past seven years, and for their commitment to the retreat mission and ministry. As they step down as the Golf Team, we wish them the best of luck.

Please save the date for the  
14th Annual Harvest on the Hill

*An Evening  
in Paradise*

Saturday, October 21, 2017  
5:00pm

*"Paradise Island"*  
Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center

*Invitation to Follow*

For "travel" information please visit:  
[www.materdolorosa.org](http://www.materdolorosa.org)  
626.355.7188 ext. 103

MATER DOLOROSA PASSIONIST RETREAT CENTER 700 NORTH SUNNYSIDE AVE. SIERRA MADRE, CA 91024

## "LIVE WITH PASSION!"



Father Cedric Pisegna, C.P. is a Passionist priest who lives at our retreat center in Houston, Texas. He travels to preach parish missions and traces his vocation back to Mater Dolorosa. He also ministers through television. His program "Live with Passion!" can be seen locally on TBN Sundays at 5 a.m. Also, he airs on KDOC 56 Sundays at 8:30 a.m. Tune in (or DVR) each week for inspiration and encouragement in your journey. His 21 books are available in the bookstore. Visit his website for prayer/free resources/itinerary: [www.frcedric.org](http://www.frcedric.org)



# Men's & Women's 2017-2018 Retreat Season

## 09/01/17

Men & Women	12-Step Recovery	Dan Sweeney
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## 09/08/17

Holy Family, Orange	Mark Buckles	714-771-4079
St. Columban, Garden Grove	Don Reid	714-530-1821
St. Joachim, Costa Mesa	Gene Gleason	714-316-9914
St. Vincent de Paul, Huntington Beach	Russell Morrissey	714-963-7979
St. John Baptist, Costa Mesa	Ron Srajer	310-294-0290
St. Justin Martyr, Anaheim	Chris Bulone	714-864-2719
St. Norbert, Orange	Tom Kleinbauer	714-974-3492
Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, LA	Gilberto Luna	323-447-9442
St. Helen, Southgate	Daniel Suarez	213-361-0784
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President	Mark Buckles	714-771-4079

## 09/15/17

All Saints, L.A.	George Cabrera, Jr.	323-245-9408
Blessed Sacrament	Jim Miller	714-894-2755
Holy Angels, Arcadia	Tony Delgatto	626-497-2429
St. Frances of Rome, Azusa	Joe Perez	626-484-1020
St. James, Redondo Beach	Tony LoBue	310-350-6361
St. Lawrence, Redondo Beach	Lee Barden	310-540-2802
St. Mary Assumption, Whittier	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Live Again Ministries	John Santos	661-270-0025
Bride Family	(Brandon Brook)	909-597-7144
Vice President	Jim Miller	714-894-2755

## 09/22/17

Assumption, Pasadena	Ed Robledo	626-791-2222
Holy Family, Glendale	Jason Schultz	213-477-0244
Incarnation, Glendale	Jim Trinity	818-241-9087
St. Robert Bellarmine	Sergio Guevara	818-568-5813
Our Lady of Grace, Encino	Rick Cincis	818-785-9359
St. Andrew, Pasadena	Jamie Benevides	626-791-5697
St. Therese, Alhambra	Rex Owens	323-273-8825
Santiago de Compostela, El Toro	Ray Puzio	949-858-8837
St. Francis of Assisi, La Quinta	John Sloan	760-836-0422
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President	James Dyrness	818-246-7694

## 09/29/17

Holy Trinity, San Pedro	John Winkler	310-833-7455
Mary Star of the Sea, San Pedro	Joe Marino	310-833-5413
OL/Assumption, Claremont	Edward Ochoa	909-624-6727
St. Joseph, Pomona	Fred Pacheco	909-860-3622
St. Joseph the Worker, Canoga Park	Ben Buenviaje	951-319-8137
St. Madeleine, Pomona	Mike Kelly	909-463-1996
St. Barnabas, Long Beach	Fred Montoya	562-424-1985
Saint Kateri, Santa Clarita	Steven Hecker	661-221-0274
Servants of the Lord	Raphael Sustento	661-254-8584
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President	Lou Oddo	714-522-5909

## 10/06/17

All Saints, El Sereno	Petie Lobdell	323-223-2520
Incarnation, Glendale	Lee Henry	818-246-5400
St. John Vianney, Hacienda Hgts	Sylvia Perez	626-968-3461
Our Lady Queen of Angels, NB	Lisa Nolette	949-219-1410
Immaculate Conception, Monrovia	Shari Cofresi	626-228-8319
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	
ice President	Carmen Cordova	

## 10/13/17

Mission San Diego	Leslie Williamson	858-278-8992
Ascension, San Diego	David Akers	858-437-1415
St. Bartholomew, Long Beach	David Herrera	562-856-9671
St. Joseph, Hawthorne	Abel Hernandez	310-569-6044
St. Philip the Apostle, Pasadena	Pat Bowler	626-793-8953
St. Jude the Apostle, Westlake Villare	Chris Tolcher	818-421-4893
Winter Group	Francisco Hernandez	909-865-7564
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President	Pat Bowler	626-793-8953

## 11/03/17

Divine Mercy Group	Estrella Arellano	909-393-6887
St. John the Baptist, Baldwin Park	Josephine Robles	562-822-7002
St. John Neuman, Irvine	Cindy Erdag	949-525-7598
St. Rita's, Sierra Madre	Ana Ptasinski	626-355-3146
St. Thomas Apostle, Riverside	Debi Young	951-315-9242
St. Boniface, Anaheim	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
St. Thomas More, Irvine	Deborah Kurilchik	714-323-5444
Vice President	Debi Young	951-237-3283
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188

## 11/10/17

Men's Recovery - Dana Point

## 11/17/17

Our Lady Miraculous Medal, Montebello	Gus Duran	626-308-3570
St. Benedict	Manuel Franco	213-716-3059
St. Bernard, Bellflower	Patrick Joyce	562-865-3497
St. Bonaventure, Huntington Beach	Herb Soto	714-842-6107
Sts. Peter & Paul, Wilmington & Holy Family	John Perez	562-743-3074
St. Cyprian, Long Beach	Tony Sanchez	562-412-0344
St. Pius V, Buena Park	Daniel Gebelin	714-870-4472
San Antonio de Padua, Anaheim	Richard Crawford	714-343-5735
Santa Clara De Asis, Yorba Linda	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
St. Mel's, Norco KofC	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
St. Elizabeth, Altadena	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President	John R. Ramos	626-300-8501

## 12/01/17

Assumption of the BVM, Pasadena	Call Retreat Center	
St. Martin de Porres, Yorba Linda	Maureen Williams	714-679-4535
Holy Family Cathedral	Rosemarie Driskill	714-310-2786
San Antonio de Padua	Jeanne Rathwohl	714-470-1309
Santiago de Compostela, Lake Forest	Geneva Shisbey	949-586-1896
Santa Clara de Asis, Yorba	Linda Michelle Molendyk	714-992-4781
St. Mel's, Norco	Elizabeth Vargas	951-790-8530
St. Joseph, Upland	Maha Abdulahad	909-239-7035
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	
Vice President		

## 01/05/18

Our Lady Queen of Angels, Newport Beach	Tom Sweeney	949-721-8334
Oxnard Group, Oxnard	Richard Perez	805-223-6176
Colton Group	Mark Martinez	909-783-1451
St. John Baptist, Baldwin Park	Jose Garcia	626-962-1848
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President	John Ramirez	805-983-2675





**Mater Dolorosa** *Passionist Retreat Center*

700 N. Sunnyside Avenue  
Sierra Madre, CA 91024



*Mountain Pieta* ..... Fall 2017



## THEOLOGY ON TAP CAME TO THE MOUNTAIN!



*The Young Adult Ministry Committee organized a successful Theology on Tap program."*

Inspiring and informative talks, great food, community building, and beer! This year, Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center's Young Adult Ministry, along with St. Andrew's Young Adult Ministry (Pasadena) and Biceps & Bibles, (St. Rita's, Sierra Madre), co-hosted the Theology on Tap (TOT) for the first time at the retreat center on the evenings of July 12, 19, 26, and August 2.

Since its inception in the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1981, TOT has proven to be a successful vehicle for reaching young adults interested in learning more about their faith, coming together to share community, and feeling welcomed and valued in the Catholic Church.

*Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center hopes TOT and the young adults will come up to the mountain again next year. Fr. Bruno D'Souza, C.P., the retreat center's young adult ministry coordinator, is working with the TOT leadership to help make it happen.*