

MOUNTAIN PIETA

FAITH: TRUSTING IN THE GOD WHO WAITS FOR YOU

For nearly one hundred years the retreats at Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center have invited participants into a faithful, trusting relationship with the God who waits for us.

Too often we think of faith in terms of a whole set of beliefs, some of which we understand, many of which are simply beyond us.

But in this year's retreat theme, **Trusting in the God who Waits for You**, the focus is less on specific beliefs and more on faith as openness to the heart of God who waits long and always lovingly --- to touch our own hearts in deep and abiding relationship. God does not shout. God is present to us in what we see as graced moments, often in hindsight.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2025-26 Retreat Theme.....	1
Conversation with T. Bishara.....	2
Solar.....	2
Director's Column: Fire Recovery...	3
A Note of Gratitude.....	3
Stay Connected.....	4
Register for Your Retreat.....	4



As a Passionist Retreat, the Passion of Jesus Christ occupies a central role. Here we see, and experience, the trusting relationship of Jesus to his Father through the gift of the Spirit, even and especially in the midst of humiliation, suffering, and death. The relationship is unbroken, as Jesus is brought through death to new life in the glory of God the Father.

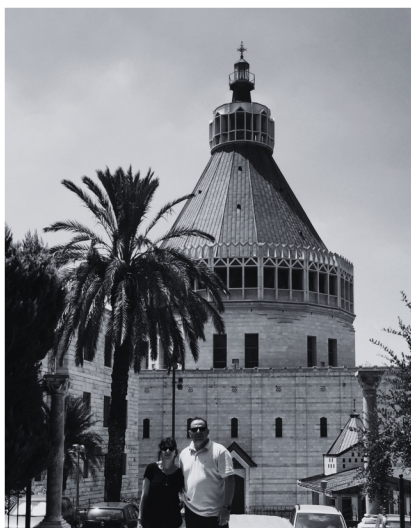
In the Spirit of Saint Paul of the Cross, Founder of the Passionists, his companions and followers have faithfully implemented this vision and have invited retreatants to share in it. The fruit of centuries of prayer and contemplation finds expression in the theme of this year's retreat, calling us to deeper trust in the God who is present and active even now in our hearts, our communities, the church, and the world. Questions? Contact Nancy at NBoldt@MaterDolorosa.org or 626-355-7188 x133.

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Come to the Mountain

A CONVERSATION WITH BOARD MEMBER, TAWFIQ BISHARA

For more than 15 years, Taffy Bishara has found spiritual peace, community, and purpose at Mater Dolorosa. A longtime retreatant, board member, and dedicated volunteer, Taffy describes his connection to this “mountain of God” as something deeper than geography—it is sacred ground. Originally from Nazareth, Taffy grew up in one of the largest Melkite Catholic families in the Holy Land. Despite the spiritual richness of living near the sites of Jesus' ministry, he shares that the most profound spiritual experience of his life happened not in Jerusalem, but in the quiet stillness of the Mater Dolorosa chapel. “I was praying about my father, who passed away before I could say goodbye,” he recalls. “While reading a book about a mother



and daughter visited by butterflies after losing a loved one, I looked up—and outside the chapel window was a yellow, spotted butterfly, just like in the book. It was February, and Brother John told me, ‘You don’t see butterflies here this time of year.’ I knew it was a message from God.”

Taffy is deeply involved in Mater Dolorosa’s leadership, serving on the Board of Directors and the Building & Grounds Committee. He’s helped guide key projects, including solar panel installation and facility planning. “Being part of these decisions is a privilege,” he says. “Ten years from now, I’ll look back and say, ‘I was part of that.’”

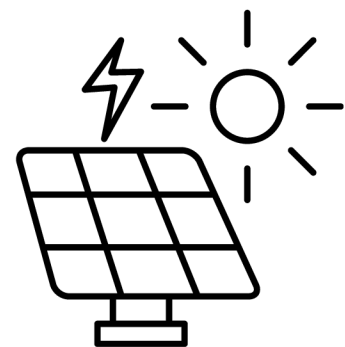
His commitment goes beyond time. A member of the Legacy Society, Taffy has included Mater Dolorosa in his estate plan. “God has blessed me, and I want to give back where I see those blessings at work. I give to Mater Dolorosa because I see the impact—it’s used for good.” Taffy also helps support others who can’t afford to attend retreats. “We want everyone to experience this place, no matter their financial situation. Sometimes people just need a little help—and later, they give back when they can. That’s how we build community.”

Reflecting on the difference between noisy, crowded holy sites and the peaceful solitude of Mater Dolorosa, he says: “The Bible tells us to go to the mountain—Moses went to the mountain, Jesus went to the mountain. Mater Dolorosa is our mountain. It’s where we find quiet, prayer, and God’s presence.”



To learn more about how to leave a legacy at Mater Dolorosa, please contact Development Director Melanie Goodyear at MGoodyear@MaterDolorosa.org or 626-355-7188 x103.

An Update on our Solar Installation...



We are waiting for the last permits to clear the City of Sierra Madre to begin construction! Their permitting process was slowed by the Eaton Fire, but we hope to start construction in fall 2025!

Eaton Fire Recovery: From Ashes to Renewal

"To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes..." – Isaiah 61:3

Six months after the Eaton Canyon fire, Mater Dolorosa continues to walk a Journey of Hope under the Shadow of the Cross. Thanks to God's grace and the unwavering support of our community, restoration is well underway. Many visitors have remarked, "It looks like it never even happened"—a testament to the progress we've made.

We've cleared burned brush, trimmed trees, and restored beloved statues, including St. Paul of the Cross, now shining in a renewed Passionist habit. Office repairs are moving forward, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has removed debris. We continue working with insurance and FEMA on long-term recovery, but challenges remain—especially in rebuilding infrastructure and key spaces like the Garden of Seven Sorrows.

The best way to support fire recovery and our long-term sustainability is to join the Century Club. Your membership helps not only with fire recovery, but also ensures our grounds remain a place of peace and prayer. Visit MaterDolorosa.org/Century-Club to give today. Questions? Contact Melanie at MGoodyear@MaterDolorosa.org or 626-355-7188 x103. Thank you for your prayers and generosity. Together, we are rebuilding beauty from ashes.



🎵 **SAVE THE DATE!** 🎵

Harvest on the Hill is scheduled for **Saturday, September 20, 2025**
This year we will feature a concert produced in collaboration with

Classical Notes
Engage • Educate • Experience

More details and ticket sales will be available soon!
Please visit our website at MaterDolorosa.org/Harvest.

A Special Note of Thanks...



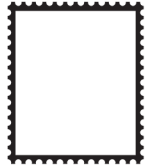
After 17 years of dedication, Director of Facilities Janet Selinske will retire this year! If you have experienced the peace of our grounds or the comfort of our bedrooms and conference rooms, it is due to Janet's skill and diligence; please thank her for her service! We're looking for someone to fill her big shoes. Do you know someone with facilities and / or hospitality experience? This position oversees maintenance and housekeeping, as well as managing hosted retreats. For more information, visit our website:

<https://materdolorosa.org/employment-opportunities/>



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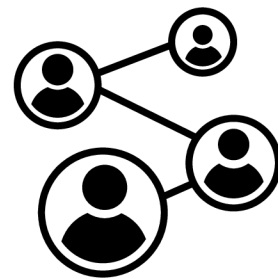
REGISTER FOR YOUR 2025-2026 RETREAT



Scan for Calendar
& Registration Links



STAY CONNECTED!



Scan & Sign Up
for our Digital Newsletter

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