

Margaret Silf's 1999 book *The Inner Compass* provides an apt image with which to begin a consideration of how St. Ignatius draws us to consider God's call in our lives. A compass by itself is rather meaningless; in the hands of a child, for example, it is simply a toy with an arrow inside that can be made to spin around. In the hands of a knowledgeable hiker, though, it is an invaluable guide toward safety.

Years ago I was hiking with some friends in the Brecon Beacons National Park in Wales. It was a stunningly beautiful landscape, and so we enjoyed spending hours traversing the mountaintops and beholding the vistas. Eventually, though, fog rolled in, and it became very dense. There was a moment when I began to feel some panic: we could see very little, and night would be coming. I began to wonder whether we would be able to return to our lodging—no small concern, since as the day grew late the temperature began to drop. My two friends did not display on their faces the concern that I was feeling, though, and began looking carefully at the detailed map and compass they had brought along. Using the compass, they were able to find the way back, even though the visibility was extremely limited.

To suggest that the human being is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, as Ignatius does, is to identify within us an inner compass. Everything, Ignatius writes, is a means to the primary end of loving and serving God. Very often, our need for a compass is not immediate: we either feel we know our way, or we are too stubborn to admit we need guidance. Yet all of us have experiences which summon from us basic questions: Where am I to go now? How do I get there? Experiences of suffering, in particular, are disorienting precisely because they take us out of our comfort zone and challenge our usual assumptions.

Ignatius counsels us to be mindful of our inner compass: to practice using it on sunny days in order that we become adept in its use on foggy ones. Further, he reminds us that even when fog rolls in, it is possible to continue in our journey. For Ignatius, the journey is not only about finding our own way to personal wholeness, but about finding our way to those in the greatest need and helping them any way we can. Ultimately, we cannot measure the

The Inner Compass



by Tim Muldoon

meaning and value of the journey based on whether or not it has met our expectations. For while the inner compass helps us find our way, it is God who places the compass in our hands and encourages us to set foot upon the path.



Tim Muldoon, Ph.D., is a 1988 graduate of Loyola Academy in Wilmette, IL, and a 1992 graduate of Boston College. For several years he was Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Mount Aloysius College in Cresson, PA. He recently began as the Director of the Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College (www.bc.edu/church21). He is the author of two books of spirituality: *Come to the Banquet: Nourishing Our Spiritual Hunger* (2002) and most recently *The Ignatian Workout: Daily Spiritual Exercises for a Healthy Faith* (2004).

Charis Ministries

Founded in June 2000 and based at Loyola University Chicago, Charis Ministries annually provides a diverse offering of opportunities for retreat and spiritual reflection to people between the ages of 20 and 40 in Chicago and Cincinnati. Charis's innovative programs are being modeled around the United States.

Upcoming Charis Retreats:

November 4–5

Service Peace and Justice Weekend Retreat in Cincinnati

November 5

One Day Retreat:
Who Do You Say I Am?

Contact:

1400 Devon Ave., Box 415
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Milford Spiritual Center hosts hundreds of retreatants a year for a variety of different retreats including silent retreats and personally directed retreats.

Milford Spiritual Center

Since the first retreat for laypeople on the grounds of the Milford Novitiate in 1929, the Milford-based retreat ministry has shared the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola with thousands. Today the Milford Spiritual Center offers countless opportunities for reflection and retreat to adults and students from greater Cincinnati.

Upcoming Retreats at Milford

November 4

St. Thomas More Retreat (for men and women) led by Fr. Ray Baumhart, SJ.

November 13

St. Peter Retreat for Men led by Fr. Keith Muccino, SJ.

November 27– December 4

Advent Personally Directed Retreat led by Fr. Lou Lipps, SJ, Fr. Dick Anderson, SJ, Sr. Wanda Wetli, CSJ, and Sr. Nancy Vollman, OSU.

December 2

Yuletide Retreat led by Fr. J. Peter Carey, SJ.

Contact:

5361 S. Milford Rd.
Milford, OH 45150-9746
web: www.milfordspiritualcenter.org
phone: (513) 248-3500

Bellarmino Jesuit Retreat House



One of the places at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House where retreatants pray and reflect.

Upcoming Retreats at Bellarmine

November 4–6

Men's Silent Retreat led by Fr. Mark W. Andrews, SJ.

November 11–13

Women's Bill W. Silent Retreat led by Fr. Richard W. Dunphy, SJ.

November 18–20

Men's Bill W. Silent Retreat led by Fr. Fred G. Reynolds, SJ.

December 2–4

Men's Silent Retreat led by Fr. Theodore C. Ross, SJ.

December 9–11

Men's Silent Bill W. Retreat led by Fr. Peter J. Fennessy.

Founded in 1948 in Barrington, IL, the Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House today provides a variety of retreats—most based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola—for adult and student groups from greater Chicago. In 2004, Bellarmine opened a state-of-the-art conference center which allows it to cater to much larger retreat and conference groups.

There are many places at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House where a retreatant can pray and reflect on their experience. Bellarmine offers the retreatant the opportunity to step away from their hectic life for a moment and become closer with God.

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