



The Director's Message

By: Dcn. John Wainscott, OFS



My name is John B. Wainscott, AKA Deacon Scotty. I have been given the awesome opportunity to be the Director of IL Ritiro Franciscan Retreat Center.

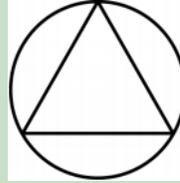
I was born in Fort Jackson South Carolina an army brat; however, I spend most of my young life in St. Louis. I can't say that I grew up in St. Louis because most of my growing up came as a member of the US Navy. The Navy is where my faith journey really began. After leaving the Navy, and putting the Vietnam War behind me, I attended Southeast Missouri State University and earned a degree in Business and Theatre. I tried for a while to work in the professional theatre. I met a lady who captured my heart. I decided I would return to school and maybe make teaching theatre my life's work. I attended Lindenwood University and received a Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatre (Directing). After a search for the right "job" I went to work for the Boy Scouts of America. I stayed with the BSA for ten years, leaving to take a job as Events Coordinator for the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis, an awesome place.

At the Cathedral I helped with RCIA and began to see that maybe I was called to a ministry in the Church. Then, a very dear friend suggested I should enter the Diaconate program. I resisted at first; but, I was ordained in June 2007.

I have found personal satisfaction in my ministry as a deacon, sharing my faith journey, and to have the opportunity of counseling others on their own path to peace. Being part of the Pro-Life work of the Church, the healing ministry of Project Joseph, visiting hospitals, homes, and those in hospice care;

December, 2016

Volume 2, Issue 2



Our E-Newsletter:

The focus of this issue is on spiritual growth through recovery from addiction. Several readers share their experience.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Director's Message	1
Bit by Bit	2
Bit by bit I have accepted God's forgiveness and I know God never stopped loving me.	
Gifts of Recovery	3
Being in contact with a sponsor and living the 12 Steps one day at a time were the anchors for a more balanced life for me.	
Goodbye from Fr. Paul	3
The time has come for me to leave the foothills of the Ozarks and my IL RITIRO Community.	
Additional Web Resources	3
Upcoming Retreats	5
Next Issue	5

all of the work has been so very fulfilling (not always happy but always joyful).

I am hopeful that I can be useful and beneficial to the Mission of IL Ritiro. The staff and the Friars have been wonderful and I again have that feeling of the joy that draws you forward into the atmosphere of the Love of God. Please stop by and let me know what I and the people of IL Ritiro can do for you or someone you care for.



Bit by Bit

By: Anonymous

“Pornography has become pervasive in our culture– a true plague, infecting nearly every corner of our society. Its disastrous effects are seen in sexual addiction, ruined marriages, and shattered lives...many men struggle with pornography.” These words are from a book by Jeff Cavins, *The pornography Plague and the Path to Christian Purity*.

I ask myself how all this filth became so prevalent, everywhere, in print, on the net, radio, TV, everywhere! How? I know how because I was a part of the nastiness to the point that pornography had cost me to lose everything, my work, my wife and friends; and oh my God my children. So let me tell you how it starts. In my youth (50’s), there were little books called “eight page bibles”– just drawings of women and men having sex. For a young mind, it is like pouring Gas on a hormonal fire. Playboy, and all the magazines kept showing more and more. And, the self–gratification! It was the 60’s and the seven words that couldn’t be spoken on TV and radio were being spoken loud. I think you get my point: one day it is bikini swim suits, then topless, and then nude. I was caught up in a need for more and more. I could tell you so much about my path to being a person without an ounce of decency. The internet was the final straw. I had reached the point where I could not be aroused unless the video was very nasty. My wife left me and took my children. A friend, while I was showing him a video, saw in one of my collections a very young girl. We actually got into a very hard push and shove. He made me erase the file or he was going to the police. He left and we haven’t been together since. I see him in Church, but we do not talk.

I would like to tell you more about how far down I had gone at that time in my life; however, I need to make this short and I want you to know how I have recovered to somewhat the man I want to be. I have spent many hours in counseling, sharing my story with others in the same boat. This was very

helpful in my recovery effort. The most important thing I did was to ask God for help. Had I called the Lord sooner my life might have been less damaging. But, I remember a line from a movie about alcoholics “you need to hear the flutter of angels’ wings” before you have a chance to return to life. I did. After that day with my friend, I spent hours and hours crying and begging for help. The more I tried to think of myself on the road to recovery; the more in my mind, I would see that young girl from the video. I have been doing better with my self–esteem because just as I was caught up in this addiction, bit by bit I have returned to my God and my Church and bit by bit I have accepted God’s forgiveness and I know God never stopped loving me. A major turn in the right direction came when I finally confessed my sins and asked for forgiveness. I know the priest could not have told anyone what I had said, but I do believe he mentioned to my ex–wife that I was making an effort at recovery. She has after some time returned to our home with the children and we are working on putting our lives back together. I don’t have the self–respect I had before, but she is an amazing woman and she is trying very hard to convince herself I will be ok; and that makes me want to succeed even more. Bit by bit, one day at a time. THANK YOU JESUS.

Additional Web Resources

The intention of the e–newsletter is to provide a resource for the spiritual life and a place for people to share their personal experience, which serves as a spring board for others. We invite your comments, suggestions, and personal reflections. Use the following links to start a thread on our [Community Forums](#), or to send us an [email](#). In addition, see our website for additional [recovery resources](#).

**COMMUNITY
FORUMS!**



Gifts of Recovery

By: Sr. Alacoque, OSF

Who of us doesn't come from a family with some dysfunction? It appears not many of us were spared. Yet, as an adult child of an alcoholic, I learned throughout my life that there were people, places and things that were a positive influence for me.

Some of the positive people in my life were family/community members, professional counselors, spiritual directors, good friends and my sponsor. Places that brought peace were churches, chapels, synagogues, and retreat centers. The things that helped were regular ACOA meetings and reading the Big Book (12 Steps and 12 Traditions). Being in contact with a sponsor and living the 12 Steps one day at a time were the anchors for a more balanced life for me.

My blessing came when having studied for a CAC (Counseling in Alcoholism Counseling), a ministry opportunity opened for me to work in an all men's residential center for recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction. The men who were serious about sobriety and recovery worked diligently during my seven years with them. These men had years of recovery because they chose to walk the walk and talk the talk. They gave hope, strength and courage to one another. The men chose the people, places and things that would enhance their recovery, sanity and sobriety. My seven years of service were both grace and blessing for me as I ministered to the men, realizing in my heartfelt prayer that they were given to me as my "brothers" and I was their "Sister".



"The choice to abuse drugs or alcohol, to engage in criminal activity or self-harm, may have seemed at the time to offer a way out of a difficult or confusing situation. You now know that, instead of bringing life, it brings death. I wish to acknowledge your courage in choosing to turn back onto the path of life. The people Jesus loved most, he said, were those who knew they had messed up and needed his help and his healing. Jesus welcomes you with open arms. He offers you unconditional love -- and it is in loving friendship with him that the fullness of life is to be found. Human beings were designed by God to love, not with "fleeting, shallow relationships," but loving God and sacrificing to serve others. In the power of the Holy Spirit, choose life and choose love, and bear witness before the world to the joy that it brings.
— Pope Benedict XVI, during a visit to a rehabilitation community, July 18, 2008

Goodbye from Fr. Paul

By: Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM

The time has come for me to leave the foothills of the Ozarks and my IL RITIRO Community. I have been asked by my provincial to join our vocation office in Chicago. But before I leave I want to say thank you to all of you who have been part of my life, my prayer and my ministry for the last six years. I have enjoyed my time with you a great deal and know that you have blessed my life and the ministry at IL RITIRO in many ways.

There have been lots of changes to buildings, grounds, signs, and driveways. Those are the easy things but maybe they make the change within a bit safer and easier. The real change has been within us. You have told me over and over what a place of peace and prayer you have found at IL RITIRO. I am grateful that I have been a part of that in some way. But, I also have to say "thank you," for you have also been part of my spiritual journey these past six years. I am aware that I have been blessed by being among people who have made their relationship with God a priority. You have to know that you are not the typical person in our world. Walking with you for just bits of your journey has been a blessing. I know that I am taking that blessing with me as I move to Chicago and the ministry of helping people grow in their relationship with God, explore Franciscan spirituality and the possibility of religious life.

As you read this, please say a prayer that God will continue to unfold God's desire in my life. And if it be God's desire, that I be blessed to help men discern their call to religious life as a Franciscan.



"We have to renew once again our total dependence on the Higher Power. This is not just a notional acknowledgment of our need. We feel it from the very depths of our being. Something in us causes our whole being to cry out, "Help!" That's when the steps begin to work. The steps are really an engagement in an ever-deepening relationship with God. Divine love picks us up when we sincerely believe nobody else will. We then begin to experience freedom, peace, calm, equanimity, and liberation from cravings for what we have come to know are damaging."

- Thomas Keating, *Divine Therapy and Addiction*



Upcoming Retreats

<u>Retreat Name</u>		<u>Date</u>
<u>Remember How Loved YOU Are; An Advent Healing Retreat</u>	Cecilia Loomer	Dec 3
<u>Pre-Christmas Franciscan Hermitage</u>	Marlene Geppert, OSF	Dec 19-21
Unity Themed – TBA	Kathleen Davis	Jan 28
Serenity as a Way of Life	Alacoque Burger, OSF	Mar 11
<u>A Lenten Day of Reflection</u>	Mary Wainscot	Mar 25
<u>A Blazing Light of Heaven</u>	Dorothy LeBeau	May 6

Private Retreats Can Be Scheduled Anytime

IL RITIRO offers scholarships to help those in difficult situations care for their spiritual lives.

Call us at 636-274-0554

[Register Now](#)

Next Issue

In our next e-newsletter, we would like to devote articles to forgiveness, and we would like to include some of your reflections. How has forgiveness played a role in your spiritual growth? We would ask you to keep it short, personal, and practical so your thoughts can be spring board from which others might begin their own reflection. Send us an [email](#) with Forgiveness in the subject line.

We look forward to reading your reflections!



Learn more about our [e-newsletter contributors](#).



Sunday Gospel reflection questions are available on our webpage or can be sent to your email each week. [Click here!](#)