



PACEM IN TERRIS

HERMITAGE RETREAT CENTER

Beginning Again

None of us could have predicted all the ways in which the coronavirus (COVID-19) would impact our world, families, work, businesses, and lives. Unlike other businesses and organizations, we thought to ourselves: “Pacem should be able to survive this. People come here to be *alone* with God.”

Survive we did, but not without many challenges. In mid-March, Pacem’s Board of Directors decided, in keeping with state and CDC guidelines, to temporarily suspend accepting hermit guests. Without hermit guests, Pacem was forced to lay off several guest care staff.

Between March 19 and May 15, the remaining staff set to work cleaning, making repairs, and assessing every Pacem procedure to discover a new way forward while adhering to the new distancing and disinfecting guidelines.

On May 18, we again began accepting guests. We’ve adapted and taken a new approach, accepting only 7-10 guests at a time so that each hermit guest has access to their own bathroom and shower. As a result, demand is more than we can meet, and guests are having to book their hermitages two months in advance. We’ve eliminated our meal ministry, and limited arrival days and times. Through it all, the original mission has been preserved. It’s just a new, and somewhat simpler, way of carrying out the ministry. In many ways, we’ve gone back to our roots.

During March and April three hermitages received new roofs and restored floors. Several hermitages were completely painted inside. We’ve opened hermitage space in St. Joseph House for clergy. On June 25, we restored the prairie Cross. Our native prairie had a controlled burn, leading to more life and flowers than ever.

Jesus Christ is the author of new life and new beginnings. Please join us in praying that the trials and challenges of this year will bring forth abundant new life for all our hermit guests.



Father Timothy Nolan blessing each of the hermitages on May 12.

Introducing St. Joseph House for Clergy and Religious

Pacem in Terris founder Shirley Wanchena dreamed of having space at Pacem where clergy could gather. That dream has now become a reality in the very place Shirley, and her son Jeff, used to call home.

Our last newsletter outlined the plan to renovate St. Joseph House as a space for groups to gather. COVID-19 changed all that, cancelling group gatherings. However, through a series of rather fortuitous, and Holy Spirit-led events, priests expressed interest in using the space for their individual retreats.

Therefore, we're introducing St. Joseph House for Clergy and Religious. Clergy, pastors, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, priests and seminarians are welcome to utilize the space for retreats. Unlike the hermitages, this space has electricity, air conditioning, and a kitchen where hermit guests can make meals. It allows the retreatant to stay for a slightly longer period of time, if necessary. The space can accommodate three people at a time.



Outside view of St. Joseph House for Clergy and Religious.



The living room inside St. Joseph House is perfect for prayer and contemplation.



One of three bedrooms located inside St. Joseph House. Each room includes a bed, desk, and rocking chair.



A small dining room space is adjacent off the kitchen for enjoying meals.



The breezeway offers beautiful views for contemplation and prayer.

The Cross on the Prairie

On the edge of the dense woodlands of the original 80 acres of Pacem in Terris is a quiet, sunny meadow that God fills every summer with His creation: wildflowers, native grasses, deer, butterflies, sandhill cranes, and other creatures. In the spring of 1982, Pacem founder Shirley Wanchena, her son Jeff, and other family members, along with Fr. Tim Nolan trekked out to this unique space and planted a ten-foot wooden cross handmade by Jeff. At its foot they consecrated the surrounding land as a holy place where God's people could be alone with Him. The planting of the cross and consecration of the land marked the founding of Pacem in Terris.

Author and Pacem Board Member Henry French underlines the spiritual significance of the cross for the tens of thousands of hermit guests that have laid hands, eyes, and hearts on it. "That roughhewn cross has been a thin place [between God and man] for countless hermit guests over the years who have stood before it or knelt before it and prayed in a place made holy and 'thin' by the prayers of so many others."¹

Thirty-eight years of Minnesota seasons heavily weathered that cross, so Ian Marin, a Pacem staff member of fifteen years and skilled woodworker, took up the challenge of renewal. Knowing well the spiritual significance of the original cross, Ian was reluctant to simply dispose of it and erect a new one in its place. Engaging his creativity, he fashioned a larger cross from new pressure-treated planks and affixed the original cross to it. Pacem's staff and hermit guests replanted the rejuvenated cross on June 25, 2020. Fr. Matthew Schmitz, of the Diocese of Crookston, blessed the new, old cross, and prayed with those gathered.

"To be asked to offer my priestly blessing at the installation was a great grace and touched me deeply," wrote Fr. Schmitz. "On my retreat before I was ordained, a monk told us: 'The priesthood is an embarrassment of riches' - we are immediately asked to give away what we receive upon ordination. As you can imagine, this pandemic has limited my opportunities to give the priestly riches away. So to be asked to do so today was an immense grace."

The juxtaposition of the two crosses has had an impact on hermit guests as well. Hermit guest, Laura, wrote, "Something about the one cross being joined to the other made me think...I saw myself as the smaller cross being joined to the larger cross of Jesus (or rather Jesus uniting Himself to me). It made me think how, just to be with me in my sufferings, Jesus lowered Himself to me by becoming man and took on a huge amount of suffering (just to be with me!). It made me realize that Jesus in His love has not abandoned me through the various trials. That image of the Cross tells me I am loved and God is supporting me and has come to me in my suffering and it has not been a waste."

So, as it always has, the cross stands ready to receive the hands, hearts, and prayers of those seeking to be nearer to God. Our Lord stands ready to renew us, not by disposing of the old, but by forgiving and healing and loving us into a "new creation" (2 Cor.5:17).

¹ Henry F. French, *Be Still and Know that I Am God* (Phoenix: Tau Publishing, 2018) 61.



The new, old Cross at the edge of the prairie.

Long-time Hermits Reflect on Pacem

Of all Pacem's hermit guests, none have been as frequent as Tom Klein and Audrey Murray. Both educators at heart, they have found Pacem a means of holy rest, relaxation, and restoration. Klein has been a guest a total of 80 times, earning him the affectionate nickname "the frequent friar." Murray has been a guest a total of 78 times.

When asked what they've gained from their frequent time spent at Pacem, both spoke of taking time to walk Pacem's trails, praying, reading Scripture, rejuvenation through sleep, and being still and listening to God.

A history teacher at Benilde-St. Margaret High School, and high school hockey coach, Klein's first hermitage retreat was scheduled for May of 1999, but he had to cancel that retreat due to his wife's cancer diagnosis a few days before. His first retreat at Pacem occurred in October of 2000.

"God began to use Pacem in Terris at a time in my life when I most needed to lean on Him," said Klein. "The stress of care-taking during that time became overwhelming. There were two gifts from God that helped anchor my hope in Him. One was retreating at Pacem once every three months, the other was learning more deeply about the sovereignty of God from Pastor John Piper."

Klein is making his fifth round through Pacem's 19 hermitages. "Since Catherine's death [in 2017], the habit of retreating at Pacem became so ingrained in my soul, it has become part of the rhythm of my life in Christ," said Klein.

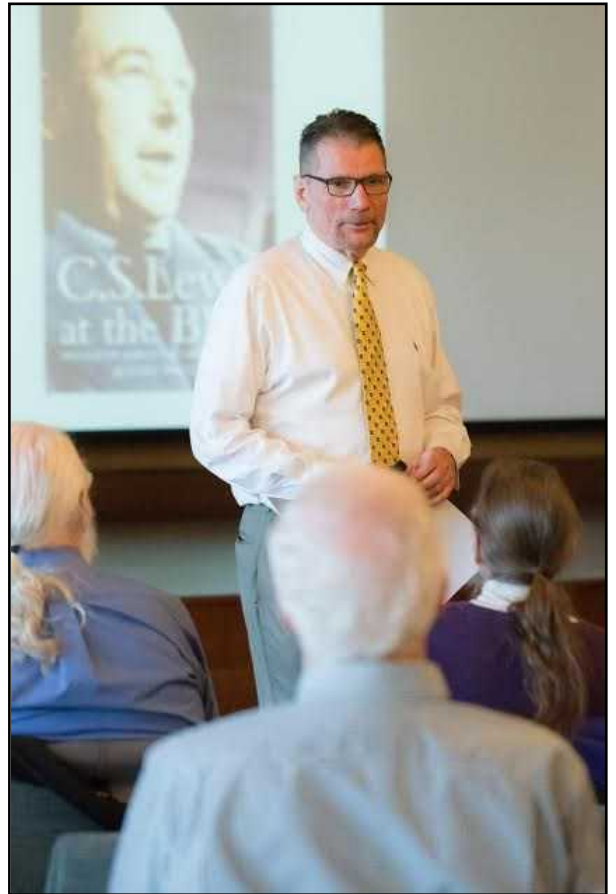
"When I came for the first time, I brought about a dozen books, thinking I would catch up on reading," recalled Klein. "As it turned out, I didn't open one. Once in the silence of the hermitage, I began to learn: the retreat is never about what I need to take care of. It truly is a time and a place for God to take care of me."

Klein cited John 7:37-38. "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

"I go to Pacem expecting the truth of His Word to become reality for me," said Klein. "God is always faithful to His Word." Klein's suggestion for potential retreatants: "Come alone, thirsting for Him."

Audrey Murray is a mother, grandmother, and retired special education teacher, having spent 19 years in the classroom. Murray's first retreat occurred on March 31, 1992.

"My first 24 hours with God had a profound effect on the direction of my life," said Murray. "I immediately realized how much I needed silence and alone time in my life. It was to be the balance to the busy-ness and noise of my life. Where I could go to get MY needs met. And where I could go to hear God's voice." (continued on p. 5)



Tom Klein teaching a group of seniors.
Photo by Lynn Giguere Photography.

Long-time Hermits (Continued)



*Audrey Murray converses with other Pacem guests.
Photo by Paul Middlestaedt*

That first retreat made such an impact on Murray that before she left the first retreat, she had made a commitment to God to return three times per year. It's a commitment that Murray has kept faithfully.

When she began coming to Pacem, Murray was teaching in the inner-city of Minneapolis, dealing with the behaviors and noise of 400-500 middle school children each day. She said the sound of 'being alone' caught her ear.

"As time moved on, I realized how truly exhausted I was each time I arrived at the hermitage," she continued. "By self-emptying myself each time, and being refilled, I was ready to re-enter my life, to do whatever God had planned for me next."

On one of her retreat's, Murray said she was struggling with questions: should I stay with my present job or should I look for something else, or should I retire? Shortly before the ending of her retreat, she received the words: "A different life is possible for you."

"It came as a bolt out of the blue," she recalled. "When I got home, I kept repeating the words over and over, changing one word: 'A different life is possible for ME.'" After talking with her husband, Murray applied for a leave of absence.

"I considered it a great gift from God," said Murray. "To have the courage to do what I needed to do for myself."

Murray's advice for anyone considering Pacem is: "If you are feeling tired and disconnected from your spirit, if you are not sure of who you are, or what you want, I encourage you to give yourself the treat of alone time with God at Pacem in Terris. I believe it will be a memorable experience for your body, mind and spirit." ♦

COVID-19 Appeal Letter Update

We give thanks for the generous response from so many to our special COVID-19 appeal letter, which went out in mid-May. To date, we have raised approximately \$27,000 toward the \$50,000 goal to cover the lost revenue and donations from the 95 reservations that had to be cancelled between mid-March and mid-May.

It's not too late to make a charitable contribution. We ask you to prayerfully consider making a donation using the form in this newsletter. Help us to cover the gap!

Did you know?



Pacem not only cares for its 240 acres of natural environment, but also for the local community? Staff clean a stretch of Highway 47 north of Pacem's grounds twice a year as part of Minnesota's Adopt-a-Highway program.

We welcome volunteers to assist us!

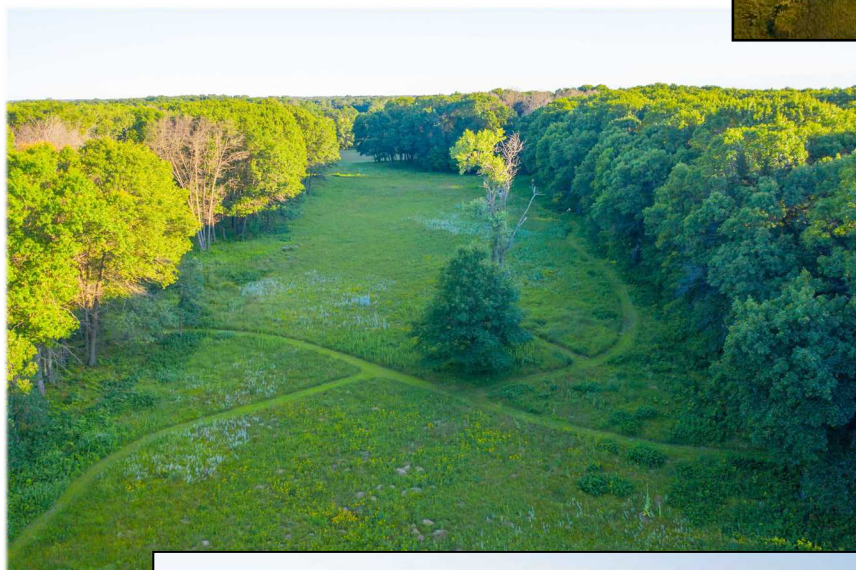


Pacem from Above



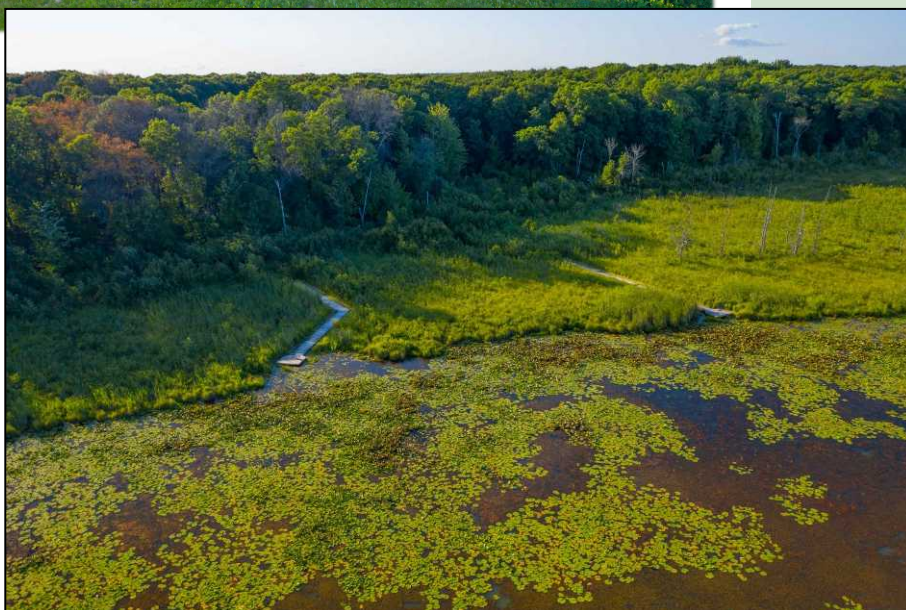
Above: Our Lady of Pacem. **Right:** Lake Tamarack. **Below:** Paths and wildflowers on the prairie. **Bottom:** Boardwalks on the lake.

Still drone photography by Ryan Unger of 87Lumens.



“We need to find God, and He cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature—trees, flowers, grass—grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... .We need silence to be able to touch souls.”

- St. Teresa of Calcutta



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“Some years ago, my wife Marty and I updated our estate planning. One of our desires was to establish a planned gift out of our estate for four of our favorite charitable organizations.

I first became a hermit at Pacem in Terris in the late 1990’s. This soon became one of the highlights of my year. So, as we prepared our estate planning, it was easy for me to choose Pacem in Terris as one of the organizations in our planned giving.

We would encourage other supporters of Pacem in Terris to consider a planned gift as well. There are a number of ways to establish a planned gift, some quite simple. It is an acknowledgement of the important mission of Pacem in Terris and it will assist them as they continue their spiritual legacy.”

- Craig and Marty Vinje

Become a Sustaining Donor

During the two months that Pacem was unable to receive hermit guests, many sustaining donors continued to provide for Pacem’s ongoing monthly needs. Sustaining donors are those who believe in the mission of Pacem enough to provide a monthly gift. By doing so, they are providing for Pacem’s recurring needs, such as electricity, propane, repairs, and more. For some, it’s \$10 per month. For others, it’s more. No matter the amount, sustaining gifts provide for Pacem’s future. Consider establishing a sustaining gift through your bank or credit union, or contact us for assistance. Call Tim Drake at 763-444-6408 or email him at tim@paceminterris.org



____ Yes, I want to partner with Pacem with a gift of: Total Amount \$75 ____ \$125 ____ \$500 ____ \$1000 ____ Other \$ ____ OR \$ ____ /month

PAYMENT METHOD

- ____ Personal check made payable to Pacem in Terris (for one-time gifts)
- ____ Credit card (for either one-time gifts or monthly gifts)
- ____ My employer has a matching gift program. Include a signed gift form.
- ____ I would like to make a gift of stock or appreciated securities
- ____ I would like to learn more about how to include Pacem in my estate plans.
- ____ I have included Pacem in Terris in my estate plans.

Please use this form for Credit Cards (Please print and complete all information)

Name on Card _____ Daytime phone _____

Billing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Credit Card # _____

3 Digit Security Code _____ Expiration Date (MM) _____ (YY) _____

Signature _____ I authorize Pacem to debit my account for the above charges.

Pacem in Terris does not keep your credit card information on file.

To make your gift online, visit: <https://givemn.org/organization/Pacem-In-Terris-1>

Thank you for partnering with Pacem in Terris in this ministry!

Retreating Safely

Yes, Pacem is open! We continue to offer hermit guests the hospitality that they have come to expect. Pacem is committed to both hermit guest and employee safety throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some of the safety precautions and protocols we've put into place.

- Accepting 50% of our total capacity.
- Suspending our evening meal ministry.
- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of touchpoints, door handles, banisters, switch plates, etc.
- Using masks in company of hermit guests.
- Optional separation when transporting guests to and from their hermitage. Guests are also welcome to walk back to their hermitage and have staff drop off and pick up baggage.
- Virtual orientation and tour replaces in-person orientation and tour.
- Adapted arrival dates, and check-in and -out times to allow staff days for disinfection and cleaning.
- Check-out time is noon.
- Staff do not enter hermitages with guests.
- Allowing each hermitage to remain empty for 24 hours between guests.
- Arrivals between 11 a.m.– 4 p.m.
- Maintaining social distance.
- Food baskets are delivered to hermitages prior to guest arrival.
- Hermitages are available only by reservation.
- Utilizing a health screening checklist for employees and guests.
- Thorough cleaning/disinfecting of bathrooms and showers between hermit guests.
- Each hermit guest utilizes her/his own outdoor biffy and indoor bathroom/shower (unless members of a single family/group).
- Contactless payment using credit card or online payment.

Guest Hermit Survey

We would appreciate your response to this survey as we make plans moving forward. This survey is also available online at: <https://s.surveypplanet.com/eNCDNCH2e>

Please Circle Your Choice for Each Question:

1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 No preference 4 Somewhat agree 5 Strongly agree

1. If I would be sharing an outdoor biffy with another guest, I would come to Pacem.

Circle your choice: 1 2 3 4 5

2. If I would be sharing an outdoor biffy and would be able to use a *multi-surface cleaner and disinfectant* in that biffy, I would come to Pacem.

Circle your choice: 1 2 3 4 5

3. If I would be sharing an indoor bathroom/shower with another guest, I would come to Pacem.

Circle your choice: 1 2 3 4 5

4. If I would be sharing an indoor bathroom and would be able to use a *multi-surface cleaner and disinfectant* in that bathroom, I would come to Pacem.

Circle your choice: 1 2 3 4 5