

THE WAY OF A BROTHER



January 30 - February 1, 2026



SAINTS

MARTHA & MARY

PARISH

Welcome!

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

4:00 pm - Arrival and Registration

5:30 pm - Mass in Chapel

6:15 pm - Dinner

7:00 pm - **Session 1 - The Way and Real Christianity** - Gary Fritsch / Roy Rudl

8:00 pm - Eucharistic Adoration and Reconciliation

10:00 pm - Benediction in Chapel

SATURDAY

7:30 am - Rise

8:00 am - Morning Prayer in Chapel

8:15 am - Breakfast

9:00 am - **Session 2 - Inside Out** - A Brother's Heart - Tom Merhaut / Dcn. Gary

10:15 am - Personal Time

11:15 am - Mass in the Chapel

12:00 pm - Lunch

1:00 pm - **Session 3 - Circle of Trust** - Listening for the Heart - Mike Laffin/ Fr. Dan

2:15 pm - Personal Time

3:00 pm - **Session 4 - Outside In** - Game Changing Conversation - Gary Fritsch

4:15 pm - Personal Time

5:30 pm - Evening Prayer in the Chapel

6:00 pm - Dinner

7:15 pm - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, All Night Adoration Begins

8:00 pm - The Chosen - Movie & Discussion, Social Time & Group Photo

SUNDAY

7:30 am - Rise - Benediction

8:00 am - Morning Prayer in chapel

8:20 am - Breakfast

9:00 am - **Session 5 - Walking with A Brother** - Matt Rosswog/ Panel Discussion

10:00 am - Mass in Monastery Church

11:00 am - Parting Gifts and Words

NOTES: WiFi: SPRC Wifi PW: 7772Cross DOOR PASSCODE: 4619#

SATURDAY: 4:00 pm - Lectio Divina (optional) in St. Gemma Conference Room

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Introduction: The Way of a Brother

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my **brother**?"

Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.

A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

Likewise, a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him.

The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'

Which of these three, in your opinion, was **brother** to the robbers' victim?"

He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."





Session 1: Real Christianity Spiritual Brotherhood

Key Takeaways

This session establishes that every man, by virtue of his baptism, is called to be a "missionary disciple"—one who follows Jesus and shares Him with others.

- **Missionary Discipleship:** A "missionary disciple" is someone who has personally encountered God's love and is now a follower (disciple) who shares that love with others (missionary).
- **The Relational Nature of Faith:** Christianity is essentially relational; we understand our relationship with Jesus through our relationships with others.
- **The "Art of Accompaniment":** This is the practice of "removing our sandals before the sacred ground of the other," walking with them at a steady, reassuring pace that heals and encourages growth.
- **The Trinitarian Model:** Accompaniment mirrors the inner life of the Trinity: the Father is the goal, the Son is the "Accompainer par excellence," and the Spirit is the interior guide.
- **Biblical Roots:** Scripture shows God accompanying Israel in the desert, Jesus walking with the disciples on the Road to Emmaus, and the early Church bearing one another's burdens.
- **Spiritual Brotherhood:** Ministry is not a "solo mission"; Jesus sent the disciples out "two by two" to provide mutual support and witness.



Session 1: Real Christianity Spiritual Brotherhood

Self-Reflection

01

Who has personally accompanied you on your journey of faith, and what did they do that was most impactful?

02

Who in your life—coworkers, friends, or family—is God calling you to accompany right now?

03

What is your biggest fear or challenge when it comes to sharing your faith with another man?

The Inventory: Taking stock of where you stand in your brotherhood with Jesus.

What has been good?

Briefly describe two or three of the strongest experiences of God's personal love for you. You don't need to write out your experience here (unless that's helpful), but just a few descriptive words that will allow you to call it to mind.

Experience 1 (strongest / most impactful)

Which, if any of these descriptions would go with your experience:

1. Lifted up above all things, focused on God alone
2. Spiritual Joy
3. Increase in Faith
4. Increase in Hope
5. Increase in Love
6. Tears of repentance or love for God
7. Peace, inner stillness
8. Other: _____

Experience 2

Which, if any of these descriptions would go with your experience:

1. Lifted up above all things, focused on God alone
2. Spiritual Joy
3. Increase in Faith
4. Increase in Hope
5. Increase in Love
6. Tears of repentance or love for God
7. Peace, inner stillness
8. Other: _____

Experience 3

Which, if any of these descriptions would go with your experience:

1. Lifted up above all things, focused on God alone
2. Spiritual Joy
3. Increase in Faith
4. Increase in Hope
5. Increase in Love
6. Tears of repentance or love for God
7. Peace, inner stillness
8. Other: _____

What has been hard?

Briefly describe two or three of the strongest experiences of failure, disillusionment or discouragement you have had in your faith life – in ministry, in prayer, in personal relationships, etc. – in which you felt that you ran into the limits of your self and what you are capable of and which led to a change in your relationship with God. You do not need to write out your experience here (unless you find that helpful), but just a few descriptive words that will allow you to call it to mind.

Experience 1 (strongest / most impactful)

Which, if any of these descriptions would go with your experience:

1. Drawn to low and earthly things
2. Sadness and discouragement
3. Lack of Faith
4. Lack of Hope
5. Lack of Love
6. Inner disturbance, distraction
7. Other: _____

Experience 2

Which, if any of these descriptions would go with your experience:

1. Drawn to low and earthly things
2. Sadness and discouragement
3. Lack of Faith
4. Lack of Hope
5. Lack of Love
6. Inner disturbance, distraction
7. Other: _____

Experience 3

Which, if any of these descriptions would go with your experience:

1. Drawn to low and earthly things
2. Sadness and discouragement
3. Lack of Faith
4. Lack of Hope
5. Lack of Love
6. Inner disturbance, distraction
7. Other: _____



Session 2: Inside Out The Heart of a Brother

This session focuses on the human heart as the "hidden center" where we encounter God and make our most important decisions.

Key Takeaways

- **The Heart as Dwelling Place:** The heart is our "hidden center," the place of truth where we choose life or death and enter into a covenant with God.
- **Authenticity and Sincerity:** The heart is the "judge of who we truly are," the place where deceit and disguise have no place.
- **Feelings as Responses:** Emotions are the heart's response to our perception of reality, learn to listen to them with kindness and curiosity rather than judgment.
- **The "Foliage" of the Heart:** Wounds and past experiences can "cover up" our true interior reality, making it difficult to understand ourselves or others.
- **Healing through Vulnerability:** True healing often requires us to expose our "withered" places to Jesus, just as the biblical figures did.
- **Jesus as the Heart-Reader:** Jesus's listening always penetrates to the heart, addressing deep needs like the desire for sight or the burden of sin.



Session 2: Inside Out The Heart of a Brother

Self-Reflection

01

With whom do you share your heart most fully, and what is it about that relationship that makes it feel safe?

02

When you experience a strong emotion (like anger / fear or joy/ courage), do you tend to suppress it or get curious about what it's telling you?

03

Why does it feel "vulnerable" to share what is truly going on in your heart with another person?



Session 3: Circle of Trust Listening for the Heart

Key Takeaways

This session transitions to the practical skill of listening as the primary way we build trust and "receive" the heart of another.

- **Heart-to-heart communication** can only happen with true listening. This may require us to transform the way we listen.
- In order to **transform how we listen**, we need to build and maintain trust of the other and set ourself aside (martyrdom).
- Evangelization, discipleship, and healing happen at the **"speed of trust"**
- **The Inside vs. Outside View:** Learn to listen for what is happening inside a person (feelings, processing, sacred ground, God's presence) rather than just the outside facts.
- **Sacred Ground:** We must treat listening sessions with a brother (OR another) as confidential, similar to the seal of confession.
- **Listen to understand**, not to respond.
- **Follow the Holy Spirit's pace**, not yours.



Session 3: Circle of Trust Listening for the Heart

Self-Reflection

01

Think of a time when someone did an excellent job listening to you. What were 3-5 qualities that person possessed?

02

What would be the hardest part for you about "martyring" when you truly listen to someone else?

03

Is there someone in your life who needs you to "remove your sandals" and listen to their "sacred ground" right now? Has someone done this for you?



Session 4: Outside In Game-Changing Conversation

Key Takeaways

This session explores how different levels of conversation can either build or break the trust necessary for spiritual growth

- **Transactional Conversations (Level I):** These are "tell and ask" interactions focused on exchanging facts; they involve low trust and validating one's own view.
- **Positional Conversations (Level II):** Characterized by "advocate and inquire," where we try to influence others to our point of view; trust here is conditional.
- **Transformational Conversations (Level III):** These involve "share and discover" dynamics where both parties are willing to be vulnerable and influenced.
- **Spiritual Bypassing:** Avoid using religious platitudes (e.g., "just pray more") to "bypass" or minimize someone's real struggles and feelings.
- **Wounds and Defenses:** When trust is built, tender places may be touched, often triggering defenses like aggression, shutdown, or self-justification.
- **Healing through Connection:** Wounds heal in the "right environment," which is the empathic presence of another person.



Session 4: Outside In Game-Changing Conversation

Self-Reflection

01 Which level of conversation (Transactional, Positional, or Transformational) do you find yourself in most often with your spouse or close friends?

02 Taking turns with your partner, share an example of **something good** that God has done in your life from the Inventory.

03 What was rewarding about sharing your story? What was challenging. What was rewarding/ challenging about listening?



Session 5: Christian Reality

Walking with a Brother

Key Takeaways

The final module focuses on assessing spiritual growth and understanding the "thresholds" of a person's journey toward holiness.

- **The Call to Holiness:** Every man is called to the "perfection of charity"—to be perfect in love.
- **Areas of Growth:** We measure growth in three primary relationships: Prayer (God), Community (others), and Mission (the world).
- **Dimensions of Growth:** Holistic growth involves Knowledge (understanding), Experience (encountering God's love), and Habits (living the call).
- **The Holy Spirit as Lead Accompanier:** Ultimately, spiritual accompaniment is about discerning what the Holy Spirit is already doing in another person's soul.

Grid for Growth	Prayer	Community	Mission
Experience	Consolation: Experience of God's love in prayer Desolation: Difficult experiences in prayer	Consolation: Experience of God's love in community Desolation: Difficult experiences in community	Consolation: Experience of God's love in sharing faith Desolation: Difficult experiences in sharing faith
Habits	Personal relationship Practices in prayer Practices in penance	Close, personal, faith-based relationships Medium sized groups Parish community	Sharing the Gospel Serving the poor Caring for the needy Forming others in Faith
Knowledge	What is the Trinity? Who is Jesus Christ? What is the Eucharist?	What is the Church? What is your responsibility to the parish? What are scriptural models of community?	What is the Kerygma? How do you tell others about Jesus? What are the works of mercy? How do you go on mission?



Session 5: Christian Reality Walking with a Brother

Panel Discussion

01

What are the most effective ways that we can grow in holiness with one another?

02

What is one "habit" of a Christian man that you are being called to develop more deeply?

03

What is your biggest takeaway from this retreat, and how will it change the way you "walk with" your brothers?

Notes



Supplemental Information

Post Retreat Information

Link to:

- [Retreat materials](#)
- [Presentations](#)
- [Spiritual Inventory \(spiritual experience and self knowledge\)](#)
smmpgh.org/events/mens-retreat

Link to Father Boniface Hicks, O.S.B.

Saint Vincent Institute for Ministry Formation (IMF) - Home:
imf.stvincentseminary.edu

Book: Spiritual Direction

A Guide for Sharing the Father's Love
by Fr. Thomas Acklin, OSB & Fr. Boniface Hicks, OSB
purchase it here:
stpaulcenter.com/store/spiritual-direction-a-guide-for-sharing-the-fathers-love

