



GONZAGA COLLEGE SJ

12th November 2020

Dear Parents,

As part of the continuing formation of the senior classes and as outlined in the Characteristics of Jesuit Education, your son will experience his final retreat after this year's winter examinations.

Although the current restrictions force us to facilitate retreats in and around the college, I am delighted that once more retreats will be offered in a variety of formats, which have the central objective of helping each student to reflect, at this more mature age, on his daily human experience of life. *What are your life principles and core values? What is the meaning of your life and how do you live it?* Ignatius of Loyola asks a fundamental life question "*What do you desire?*"

The retreat is a unique and valuable opportunity for your son to get in touch with his true self, learn to pray, reflect and develop a faith, which becomes more sensitive to the presence and activity of God in one's life, as well as the call of the Gospel to serve others.

As far as possible and in accordance with health and safety guidelines, we try to accommodate as many as possible with their preferred options. Your son may opt for a combination* of retreat experiences as long as they do not overlap. This year the following retreat formats will be offered here on the grounds of Gonzaga College SJ between **Wednesday, 25th and Friday, 27th November**.

1) Taizé Prayer in the Chapel with Chaplain Fiona Owens (Wednesday)

Taizé Prayer is a simple, meditative form of worship, calling us to dwell deeply on Christ's presence around and within us. Mantra songs (like "Jesus, Remember Me"), prayerful silence, and short readings guide the focus of the prayer in a candle-lit environment. Taizé Prayer is named for the ecumenical Christian community formed in Taizé, France during World War II. Today the Taizé community attracts young retreatants from around the world and from all Christian denominations, including Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions.

Prayer services á 40 minutes will be offered in the chapel on Wednesday, 25th November at 14:15, 15:15 and the final one taking place at 16:15, just before diner at 17:00.

* this retreat experience should be combined with a second retreat scheduled on Thursday and/or Friday.

2) Silent retreat directed by Pat Corkery SJ (Thursday & Friday)

In the past groups travelled to Mellifont Abbey and Mt Melleray Abbey to experience the quiet reflective life of the monks. This year Pat Corkery SJ will direct this reflective silent retreat. For it one needs to be comfortable with extended periods of silence and be prepared to learn how to pray, as well as deeply and honestly reflect. Individual spiritual direction is also available where requested. It is a day retreat based on the four-weeks of St Ingatius' Spiritual Exercises. This retreat assumes a basic faith in God, even if it has not been developed, or a desire to attain such faith. There are periods of speaking as well as silence.

* this retreat experience should be combined with one Taizé prayer session on Wednesday.



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3) “What is your dream?” A shorter version of the *Daniel-McNelis-Retreat* directed by Myles O’Reilly SJ and Elisabeth Clarke (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday)

This is a personally directed interactive retreat in the Ignatian tradition, with individual and group prayer, bonding exercises, sharing and reflection. For this retreat one needs to be comfortable sharing feelings as well as ideas. This retreat is limited to a maximum number of 18 participants.

4) “Contemplatives in Action” Retreat directed by Callum Douglas (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday)

The retreat will be led by the Faber Companions and supported by past pupils. The aim of the Contemplatives in Action retreat is to explore the Ignatian approach to living a full life: outward effort and good works are best motivated by an inward sense of peace and self-understanding. Many cultures have similar coming-of-age rituals, all designed to help young men access an outer strength born of inner sensitivity. The retreat draws influence from these practices, and will offer students a chance to leave their comfort-zones and experience something of the deep freedom found in courageous vulnerability.

5) “Responding to Injustice” Retreat directed by Clare O’Brien-Quinn (Friday)

The retreat, *Responding to Injustice*, is about looking at the state of the world and learning how to serve it more effectively in your adult life. In Gonzaga your son will have learned about being “*men for and with others*”, but this retreat makes space to renew your commitment to make the world a better place. The *Responding to Injustice* retreat asks those participating to look beyond their own need and wants, as Jesus did. All this is experienced in the context of one’s own dreams, which may be to further study, form a career, create a family and nourish one’s life.

* this retreat experience can be combined with a second retreat scheduled on Wednesday and/or Thursday (subject to availability).

Finally, to provide an opportunity for the year group to come together, we invite your son for **lunch** on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (13:30 to 14:00) and for **dinner** on Wednesday and Thursday (17:00 to 18:00) in the dining hall.

Your son should indicate his preference as to retreat experience by marking 1,2,3,4,5 in order of preference on the application form. Please note that the Taizé prayer should be combined with a retreat experience taking place on Thursday and/or Friday. Please also ask your son to indicate if and when he will join lunches and dinners. As far as possible and desirable, we shall try to accommodate first choices of as many people as possible, provided the form is handed in or emailed to Ms Clarke (eclarke@gonzaga.ie) by Tuesday, 17th November 2020.

Retreat participation is compulsory. On days where one does not attend a retreat there will be supervised study in the library. All Sixth Year students will attend classes on Monday, 23rd and Tuesday, 24th November 2020.

A retreat is a time for quiet individual prayer and reflection. For this reason, mobile phones are not permitted. The school’s Code of Behaviour continues to apply at all times.

Yours sincerely,

Elisabeth-Anna Clarke
Director of Ignatian Formation



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See Options overleaf. Please detach and return to Ms Clarke by Tuesday, 17th November:

Name:

Class:

1. Taizé Prayer [25/11 á 40 minutes]

This retreat should be combined with a second retreat scheduled on Thursday and/or Friday.

2. Silent Reflective Retreat [26/11 & 27/11]

This retreat should be combined with one Taizé Prayer session on Wednesday.

3. *What is your dream?* Retreat [25/11 to 27/11]

This retreat CANNOT be combined with another experience.

4. *Contemplatives in Action* Retreat [25/11 to 27/11]

This retreat CANNOT be combined with another experience.

5. *Responding to Injustice* Retreat [27/11]

This retreat can be combined with a 2nd retreat scheduled on Wednesday and/or Thursday, but is subject to availability.

Did you attend a Kairos retreat in 5th year?

Yes [] No []

Did you wish to?

Yes [] No []

Are you a Kairos leader?

Yes [] No []

On the following days I will join *(please tick accordingly)*

Wednesday [25/11]

LUNCH DINNER

[] []

Thursday [26/11]

[] []

Friday [27/11]

[] N/A

Do you have any dietary requirements?

Yes [] No []

If yes, please specify: _____