

Psychiatrist's Bequest of Home Honors "Holy Ground" that Gave Her Strength

by Bert Keane

Dr. Mary Margaret Flynn spent the major portion of her thirty years as a psychiatrist dealing with the seriously mentally ill.

Her practice—working with patients who were potentially suicidal or violent or suffering from schizophrenia or psychotic disorders—required extraordinary spiritual stamina, she said. "My work couldn't just be a career, a way to earn money. It had to be a vocation."

She found that El Retiro strengthened her for her work. "I don't think that every psychiatrist needs a belief system based on religious faith, but it helped me. Spirituality is not a luxury for me, it's a necessity. To keep my spiritual health I needed to go to holy ground. El Retiro offers that."

The Minnesota native discovered El Retiro in 1989. "I'm a cradle Catholic and am at home with Jesuit spirituality," she explained. "I came to El Retiro as something of a prodigal daughter, having drifted away from the church." She now feels deeply at home. "One of my favorite prayers of the Mass is 'Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your church...'. Those words make me feel connected to a broader community of believers."

She recently decided to include El Retiro in her estate plan by bequeathing it her San Carlos home, or the proceeds from its sale. "I see my gift being increased many times over," she said. "I experienced a spiritual healing at El Retiro. I want other people to experience that healing, too. To me, my bequest will be like giving Jesus loaves and fishes to multiply."

Dr. Flynn trained in psychiatry after ten years in

general practice, and then served in the US Army for nine years (Lt. Col. Ret.). After the Army, she worked at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Palo Alto and then as a psychiatric consultant in geriatric medicine for San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services.

Asked how her work with the mentally ill has changed over the years, she answered, "I like to believe that I have become kinder toward my patients. My head



Dr. Mary Margaret Flynn

remains fully engaged, but I'm coming more and more from the heart." She also volunteers for the National Association for the Mentally Ill. "It's such a privilege to work with family members with afflicted relatives," she said. "I have learned so much from them." She worries about the treatment of the mentally ill in the US. "About 72% of seriously mentally ill are in our prisons," she said. "It's a serious problem."

A hiker, reader, animal lover and environmentalist, she is taking time off from her taxing profession at age 68, but feels called to return. "If I'm still capable, I plan to go back to behavioral health and

recovery programs." Regardless, El Retiro will remain part of her life and is now a memorial to her late parents, Roberto Raymond and Anna Bartunek Flynn; she has sponsored one of the outdoor stations of the cross in their memory. But above all, El Retiro is where she says she "experiences the presence of God in all things," adding: "What I've realized there was that all these years the Lord has been with me all the time."

The Jesuit Retreat Center is honored to list Dr. Mary Margaret Flynn as a member of its Legacy Society.

The Mustard Seed

An update on the financial development of JRC

"The mustard seed is the smallest of all, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants, becoming so big a shrub that the birds of the sky come and build their nests in the branches." Mt 13:32

Annual Appeal:

Our generous friends have contributed \$67,770 in response to the 2010 Appeal.

Bequests:

We have received \$25,000 from The Estate of Gerald W. Polley, \$25,000 from The Estate of John J. Bible, and \$10,000 from The Estate of Louis J. Helmuth.

Grants:

We are grateful to The Carl Gellert Foundation for the gift of \$5,000 toward The Pierre Favre Program. Many thanks for your continued support.

Trust:

We received \$2,500 from Trust Funds Incorporated. We are very grateful that you chose to support the work of the Jesuit Retreat Center.

Scholarships:

In this quarter, we were the recipients of \$1,725 in scholarship funds to assist those who would otherwise be unable to enjoy a weekend of prayer and silence at the Jesuit Retreat Center.

General Donations:

Friends of the Retreat Center have donated \$98,658 to our general fund.

Other Donations:

We have received \$10,600 for The Pierre Favre Program, which trains lay people and Jesuits in giving the Spiritual Exercises.

On-line Book Store:

Please make a note! When searching for books, CD's, electronics, toys, etc., please place your order through *amazon.com*, accessible through the JRC on-line bookstore. This process will credit a percentage of your purchases to our center.

An Opportunity:

Steve Welch, Certified Financial Planner and JRC benefactor, can consult with our friends who are interested in discussing their charitable goals. Tax laws offer opportunity for wealth protection and advantageous estate transfer. In concert with your tax adviser and estate planning attorney, Steve can help you identify what you might achieve by including the Jesuit Retreat Center in your family's estate plan. You may talk with Steve confidentially and without obligation at 650-948-4141.

Our generous benefactors are remembered daily and gratefully in our Masses and prayers.

The Diamond Path

Executive Director's Message

On the first day of the poetry course I taught at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, I read one line from Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," and another from a popular textbook that paraphrased each line so that students could "understand" Shakespeare. The first line is one we are all familiar with: "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? / It is the east, and Juliet is the sun." The textbook line reads: "Wait, what's that light in the window over there. And there's Juliet."

I asked the students, "What's the difference?"

There were usually very long pauses. (For students who text and twitter, any continuous line of text represents a challenge.)

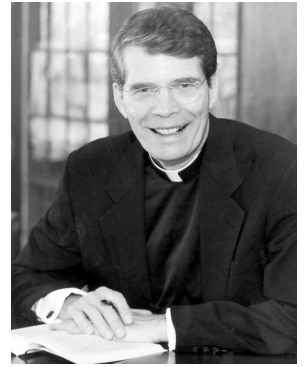
But it is, basically, the difference between a real diamond and paste. One line brightens and enlivens the imagination, the other line crumbles into dust. One is the real McCoy, the other one is fake. In one line you hear the wonder and joy of Romeo as he compares Juliet to the dawn, in the other you hear a querulous monkey. Shakespeare's line touches the heart. The textbook line is spurious.

We spend much of our lives trying to discover the difference between the real and the fake. How do we know when love is real? How do we know when friendship is to be trusted? How do we gauge our emotions and judgment when choosing a career: are they right judgments, are our emotions false or sentimentalized? Do we make choices because we're intimidated or because of peer pressure? Are we being guided by unruly attachments that make us live a false life, or are we inwardly free to choose the right course, the diamond path, for ourselves?

Discernment is at times a tightly-wrapped package. To open it requires the right tools: silence, prayer, a willingness to listen (both to God and to a trusted guide), a readiness to let go of preconceptions, an acceptance of the consequences which may flow from God's entrance into our lives, and the generosity that may require us to offer everything. It is not always easy to discern the diamond path.

We are fortunate here that our daily work is to help people recognize and discover for themselves the path we must all choose in order to grow as loving children of a loving God. Serious prayer opens the heart and frees it so that it can listen to the Spirit. And that Spirit is always leading us closer and closer to what is real: the presence of God within us. Once we know and experience that presence, we find it easier to make decisions about our life; what we decide to do may in itself not be easy (to go freely to death, as Miguel Pro did, took courage), but we know the course we should take. We have discerned the right way.

With the grace of God's presence within us, we are able to take the diamond path.



Fr. William J. Rewak, S.J.

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Dear Retreatants and Friends,

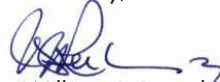
These last several years have brought both blessings and challenges. We struggle, like any non-profit organization in our country, where donations have decreased, insurance and utility costs have risen sharply, and where maintenance sometimes takes a backseat to more pressing needs. However, we have not been idle in that regard: we've purchased new table servers for the dining room, for example, and also put a new roof on Marini Hall. Even though we have our share of challenges, they are more than made up for by our blessings. And our most important blessings are our individual benefactors and foundations - to which this Donor list will attest.

In looking back over our history since 1926, it is obvious that God has continually rescued and preserved El Retiro as a place of prayer and holiness for the many who come here. Without your generosity, none of this would have been possible.

For those of you who do not appear on this list, we invite you to join us in supporting our ministry for the level that is right for you. We also ask for your continued prayers for the Jesuit Community, our staff, and our benefactors.

Mass is offered each week for our benefactors. We ask God to bless each one of you.

Sincerely,



William J. Rewak, S.J.

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PLEASE NOTE: Although the names, foundations, and trusts listed in this report were reviewed carefully, it is possible that errors occurred. Please accept our apologies if we inadvertently omitted your name, or if we did not spell it correctly. All of our donors are very important to The Jesuit Retreat Center and are greatly appreciated.

Two People We Will Miss

Bert Keane, our indefatigable Director of Development, is leaving us to prepare for a new venture in his life. His loyalty to the Retreat Center has been evident for decades as a retreatant, volunteer, and lately as a member of the staff. We have been fortunate to have his services and are especially grateful to him for his work in establishing the "El Retiro Legacy Society," which honors those who include the Retreat Center in their wills. We are grateful to Bert for the seminal work he has done in this regard, and for all his other contributions.

We also say goodbye to Patty Subick, our Finance and Human Resources person, whose knowledge and dedication have been responsible for a re-organization of our entire financial structure. She joined forces with Paul Dorian, our IT consultant, in re-vamping our record-keeping, and she has been tireless, and generous, in watching over staff, in listening to them, in caring for them. She will now, like Bert, enter into a new phase of her life, and we wish her well.

Everyone who works at the Retreat Center gives us something special: a part of who they are. And we hope they take with them a share in the grace and joy we all experience here in this sacred place.

Godspeed, Bert and Patty!

Upcoming Retreats

May

6-8 The Grandeur of God - for You!
Non-Silent Retreat for Men, including Menlo Park, Ferrari/Rossi, Stockton, and Joseph Stack Groups
- Fr. Jim Flynn, S.J. & Fr. George Collins, S.J.

13-15 Formando la Familia de Dios
Ejercicios Espirituales en Español
- Fr. George Schultze, S.J. & Mrs. Julie Paavola

20-22 Letting Go, Letting God
Recovery Retreat in the Language of Al-Anon
- Msgr. Terrence Richey

21 The Prophets of Israel II
(Sat.) Bible Day of Prayer
- Fr. Joe Fice, S.J.

27-29 A Journey Through Grief to Healing
Non-Silent Retreat for Those Grieving
- Fr. Joe Fice, S.J.

28 The Song of Motherhood
A Day of Prayer for Mothers
- Mrs. Julie Paavola

June

3-5 An Early Summer (Exercises) Getaway
Silent Retreat for Women and Men
- Fr. Jerry Hudson, S.J. & Ruby Buffin, Ph.D, M.Div.

10-12 Everyday Surrender
Recovery Retreat for Women and Men
- Msgr. Terrence Richey

23 - July 27 Silent 33-Day Retreat Program
25 - July 4 Silent 8-Day Retreat

July

5-14 Silent 8-Day Retreat
15-24 Silent 8-Day Retreat

In Memoriam

Robert D. Barbagelata
Thomas Patrick Burns
Robert Campbell
Robert M. Connelly
Claire Constantino
Fr. Richard T. Coz, S.J.
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Marie Woelflen
Rosina T. Zolizzi

May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace.

The Jesuit Retreat Center
of Los Altos



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Book Recommendation from Fr. Duc Vu, S.J.

Life of the Beloved by Henri Nouwen

This book is written at the urgent request of Nouwen's secular Jewish friend "to speak a word of hope to people who no longer came to churches or synagogues and for whom priests and rabbis were no longer the obvious counselors."

That word of hope is "Beloved" taken from the narrative of Jesus' baptism which Nouwen sees as the core human identity. As we grow up, the world heaps upon us self-rejection or its twin arrogance, leaving us rootless and aimless in the ebb and flow of life. For Nouwen, the pneuma-dynamics to claim this identity and grow in it lies in the four-fold action of the Eucharist: taken (chosen), blessed, broken, and given. As Jesus, the prototype of humanity, offers himself in the Eucharist, he takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to us all. Each of us, believers and non-believers, receives life as a blessing, spends it in leisure or toil, long or short, joyfully and sorrowfully, and finally must give it up. The more wholeheartedly we embrace our chosenness, blessedness, brokenness, and givenness, the more freely, wisely, courageously, and generously we live our lives - in sickness and health, in poverty or wealth, in good times and bad.

Ironically, the book failed to convince his Jewish friend but appealed greatly to his Christian fellows. For me, *Life of the Beloved* brings down to earth the Eucharistic implication: a constant challenge to live my life the way Jesus offers himself in the Eucharist, willingly and magnanimously to the end.

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