



# Offerings

...touching lives in Christ

September / October 2017  
Volume 4 • Issue 5

The cost of this newsletter was generously subsidized by a faithful member of the Board of Trustees, and a gift from a community of religious sisters.

Thank you!

## WEEKLY MEETINGS

The Center has a variety of regularly meeting groups for your spiritual growth. Newcomers are always welcome at any of these groups.

Our **Catch the Spirit Bible study group** will resume its **Tuesday meetings, 10-11:30 a.m.** on September 5. This group discusses the lectionary (Bible) readings assigned for the coming Sunday.

**The Contemplative Prayer Group** meets **5:30 - 6:30 pm on Wednesdays**. This meditation group is facilitated by Tom O'Connor. To attend, contact him at 315-313-3758.

**The Women's Faith Sharing Group** meets **monthly on Thursdays at 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.** Upcoming meetings include September 21, October 19, and November 16. Led by Kathy Papa, group members meet for mutual spiritual encouragement as they navigate life. The suggested offering is \$15. For more details, call Kathy at 315-457-4922.

## Awaken to faith!



**AN AWAKENING TO FAITH: WE ARE BORN OF STARDUST**  
Thursday, October 19, 7 - 9 p.m. | Rev. George Coyne, SJ  
Fee: \$20 or whatever you can afford



Science has brought us amazing insights into a universe that contains 100 billion galaxies, each of which holds billions of stars. As these stars live and die, they provide the chemicals necessary for the evolution of life. We came to be in this universe. We are born of stardust! Our religious faith leads us to ask a further question. Did we come about by chance or by necessity?

What is God's role in all of this? Join us for a thought-provoking Evening of Renewal with George Coyne, SJ, an astronomer who directed the Vatican Observatory from 1978 until 2006. Reflecting his Jesuit background, he'll approach his discussion with Ignatius's wisdom of "finding God in all things." Currently, Rev. Coyne holds the McDevitt Chair in Physics at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, where he teaches astronomy and the relationship between science and religious belief. Don't miss this opportunity to understand the universe and your place in it!

Fall programs, continued on page 3

## ABOUT US

The Spiritual Renewal Center is a Christian ministry that provides spiritual direction and renewal opportunities to all members of the community.

Learn more about us at [spiritualrenewalcenter.com](http://spiritualrenewalcenter.com).

## DIRECTOR

Jim Krisher

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The Spiritual Renewal Center is located at 1342 Lancaster Avenue in Syracuse. You can reach us at 315-472-6546.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Thursdays: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., and Fridays: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Spiritual Renewal Center will be closed on Monday, September 4 for Labor Day and Monday, October 9 for Columbus Day.

## A Note from a Member of our Board of Trustees

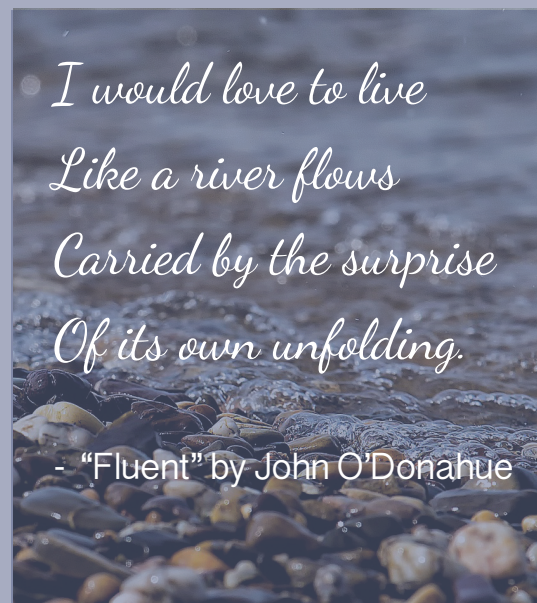
There is a graced freedom I discover anew each time I enter through the doors of the Spiritual Renewal Center. Through the Center's offerings, I have come to know God as my Faithful Friend who scatters seeds of love everywhere with no regard for waste or worthiness. I've come to learn how God speaks to me. My journey is like the river as I am surprised by unfolding insights—I have been embraced with love and held close in loss—I am raised to new life each day. God's grace is amazing.

The Spiritual Renewal Center quietly opened its doors in 1978. Jim Krisher, the Center's founding director, spoke at an evening Mass I attended that Fall. He told us about the Center, inviting each of us to seek. I couldn't get there fast enough and, 39 years later, I am still here. The Center has been my spiritual refuge over these many years. I thank God for the Spirit's generosity and the generosity of the Center's supporters, keeping our doors open all these years.

Please, my friends, continue to support this good work, that it might continue to bless many more for many years to come!

In Christ,

*Patty Hubbard*



## Novice joins Center this fall



We are pleased that the Society of Jesus has assigned Shaun Slusarski, a Jesuit novice to work at the Spiritual Renewal Center this fall! He'll be with us every Tuesday and Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Shaun is a second year novice from Glenside, PA. He studied theology at Boston College and Villanova University and taught religious studies at St. Joseph's Prep in Philadelphia. Shaun will lead the Tuesday morning Bible study until Christmas, working in our prison ministry and Spiritual Exercises retreat, and

offering special events during his months here.

Be sure to greet Shaun when you see him and introduce yourself to him. Welcome, welcome Shaun! +

“God does not ask much of us, merely a thought from time to time, a little act of adoration, sometimes to ask for grace, sometimes to offer your sufferings, at other times to give thanks for the graces, past and present, that have been bestowed on you.... One need not cry out very loudly; God is nearer to us than we think.”

-Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*

### The Gospel of John

Wednesdays at 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Sept. 20 - Oct. 11

Presented by Jim Krisher, the Center's Director



The gospel of John has been known from ancient times as “the spiritual gospel” and “the eagle’s word,” names which reflect its depth of insight into the person of Jesus, his significance in human history, and in the life of each believer. Join us for this four-session course, taught by Jim Krisher at St. Joseph the Worker’s Parish Center, located at 1001 Tulip St. in Liverpool. Jim will explore the historical and religious setting of this last-to-be-written of the gospels, and will lead us in reflecting on the meaning of selected texts from John for our own lives as Christians today.

Contact Micki Bliss of St. Joseph the Worker Parish at 315-451-2452 to register in advance or for more details.

### Spirituality & Embodiment

Thursday, Sept. 28 at 7- 9 p.m.

Presented by Dr. Rebecca Letterman

Fee: \$20 or whatever you can afford



For much of Christian history, committed disciples of Jesus have had a rather ambiguous relationship with their bodies. Are our bodies enemies of our spiritual lives? Are they tools for us to do good works? Are there other ways to understand our bodies more faithfully as God intended in light of biblical revelation? Meditating first on the life of Jesus, we will consider together the gifts and challenges of what it means to be human bodies, using insights of Scripture, Christian tradition, medicine and neuroscience, and our own experiences. Together, we will explore what it means to live with an increased awareness of our bodies as God’s gifts.

Our presenter, Rebecca Letterman, Ph.D., studied formative spirituality with well-known professors Dr. Adrian van Kaam, founder of the field of Formative Spirituality, and his colleague Dr. Susan Muto. Rebecca is Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation at Northeastern Seminary, where she teaches courses in Spirituality, Early Church History, Theology and Practice. She also serves as clergy at the Community of the Savior in Rochester. She is coauthor of a recently released book entitled, *Understanding our Story*.

### Saying YES to God

Wednesday, Oct. 18 at 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. | Half-Day Retreat

Presented by Mary Ellen Schopfer, CSJ

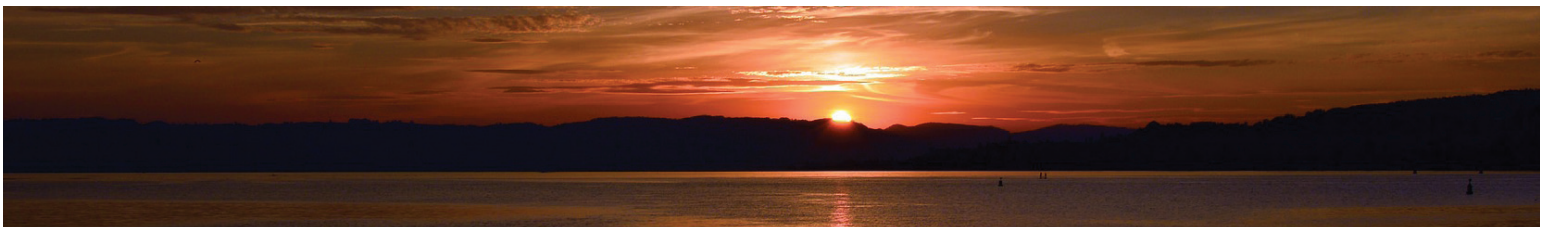
Fee: \$45 or whatever you can afford | Includes Lunch



God gently beckons and calls us into relationship and we can say yes to that invitation with our presence and prayer. Might God be beckoning you? Join Sr. Mary Ellen Schopfer for a renewing half-day prayer retreat here at the Spiritual Renewal Center. Mary Ellen is a staff spiritual director with a great depth of experience in spiritual formation. We’ll explore a variety of ways of praying, and notice what stirs our hearts and souls. Music, Scripture, readings, and written reflection will all be part of our time. Lunch is provided. Please contact the Center to register by Friday, October 6.

Unless noted, you can register for these events by visiting [spiritualrenewalcenter.com/events](http://spiritualrenewalcenter.com/events). You can also call 315-472-6546 or email [mail@spiritualrenewalcenter.com](mailto:mail@spiritualrenewalcenter.com).

Check our website regularly for updates about the Center and other upcoming events.



This month, we feature a very special Grace story from the Center's Director, Jim Krisher, about his mission trip to Croatia.

## What Does *Grace* Look Like?

I was privileged to spend three weeks this past July on a mission trip to Zagreb, Croatia, where I worked as a volunteer with Jesuit Refugee Services. I had daily contact and rich conversations with many beautiful but suffering people in three refugee camps there.

I met men and women and a significant number of unaccompanied minors, most from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, as well as smaller numbers from other troubled countries in the Middle East and beyond. They had fled their countries, leaving behind homes and possessions to escape the horrific violence of war, religious persecution, ethnic hatreds and extremist threats. Many had already lost loved ones or entire families. Their stories would break my heart, and I felt so helpless because I couldn't make things better for them. I only hoped my caring and attention to their stories brought them some small comfort in the face of so much tragedy. What does grace look like in the midst of such sadness and pain?

There was the twenty-three year old man who had to flee from Bangladesh because he was Hindu, and some extremists among the Muslim majority were killing or maiming the Hindu minority. His father was already dead, and his mother was in the hospital after having her arm chopped off by the extremists. Yet, this wide-eyed guy with a gentle smile still nurtured hope for a better future for himself and reunion with his mother in a safer country. *That's what grace looks like.*

There was the young married couple, also twenty-three, who had secretly converted to Christianity in Iran, where that is a crime punishable by death or decades of imprisonment. They had fled when their conversion began to be whispered about and the religious police learned of it. I sat in their little room at the camp in awe of the passion in their voices as they spoke of Christ and their dedication to Him. *That's what grace looks like.*

There was the young Muslim man from Aleppo in Syria, who had fled the war there with his pregnant wife and their three-year old daughter. His city, he told me with his scant English vocabulary, was "all gone" and the people of the city were "all dead." Yet here he was in this shabby refugee camp, holding his little girl on his lap and smiling at her with such tender fatherly love. It could be months of waiting to hear if they will be granted asylum or not, yet for him the important thing was the well-being of his family and looking toward a new life for them. *That's what grace looks like.*

I could go on and on telling such stories.

These refugees are the victims of human sin, driven away from their homelands and often shut out by countries that could provide them safety and assistance. Yet, God does not turn away from them. Deuteronomy tells us that God loves the foreigner and seeks justice for those on society's margins – and that we, as God's people, are commanded to do the same (Dt. 10:18-19). Not only does God care deeply about refugees and how they are treated, but God's Presence shines through their often tear-filled eyes. As St. Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more.

I saw that abounding grace during my time in Zagreb, and I will never forget that experience.

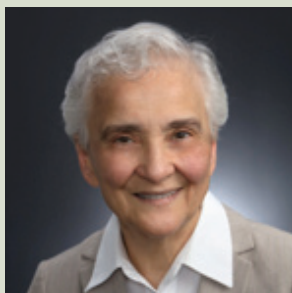


**Center Director Jim Krisher, holding a beautiful Syrian refugee baby in Zagreb.**

That's what *Grace* looks like. +

# New Spiritual Directors join staff at the Center

We welcome two new Spiritual Directors to the Spiritual Renewal Center's staff. Our ministry of spiritual direction continues to grow, now providing direction to more than 240 people a month. To explore whether spiritual direction might be fruitful for you, visit [spiritualrenewalcenter.com](http://spiritualrenewalcenter.com) or call Jim Krisher at the Center.



Sr. Rose Bill, MFIC is a Franciscan Sister. She has a master's degree in Theology from St. Michael's College and is a certified Spiritual Director. She recently retired from Holy Cross Church, DeWitt, NY where she ministered as Pastoral Associate.



Steve Moore is the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Marcellus and a licensed psychologist at Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse. He trained in spiritual direction at the Haden Institute/Mt. Carmel Spiritual Center in Niagara Falls and Loyola House in Guelph.

## Major Programs Begin This Fall

It's not too late to apply for two Center programs—one focuses on developing a more intimate relationship with God, and the second is a training program for spiritual directors. Act now if you are interested!



### **The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola**

For more information, contact Sr. Marise May at 315-472-6546.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius have helped many to make the scriptures an integral part of their lives and prayer, teaching them how to discern God's leading in the circumstances of everyday life. The Spiritual Renewal Center is once again offering the full program of the Spiritual Exercises as a 30-week retreat. We are offering two options this year: Tuesday afternoons 1 - 3 p.m., and Tuesday evenings 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Participants meet with an individual prayer guide and for a group session led by one of the retreat leaders. Material for daily prayer is given in the book provided.

The program, co-led by Marise May, OSF, and Lou Sogliuzzo, SJ, begins September 19 and continues through mid-May. The fee for this retreat is \$600, which may be paid in weekly increments

### **The Horizons Program: Training to Be a Spiritual Director**

Contact Jim Krisher, Director of the Spiritual Renewal Center, at 315-472-6546 for more details or an application.

Are you sensing a call to the ministry of spiritual direction? Apply for our two-year HORIZONS Foundational Program for the Training of Spiritual Directors. This practicum-based program is for people wanting to develop their gifts in this vitally important Christian work. Under Jim Krisher's direction, monthly sessions focus on the principles and practices of spiritual direction, alongside close supervision of direction practice. Applicants must have substantial knowledge in theology, scripture, and spirituality, and a minimum of one year's experience receiving spiritual direction.

The first year of HORIZONS meets monthly at the Center October 2017 through June 2018, on second Mondays, 1-5:15 p.m. Tuition is \$695 per year. Partial scholarships may be available, dependent on need.

# Major Library Upgrades are Complete!



*Visit the Center's library from the comfort of your couch!*

For the last year, a dedicated group of volunteers has cataloged the Center's nearly 10,000 books into an online database. Now, anyone with an internet connection can search the Center's library holdings from a link on our home page. We also have a computer in the Center's reception area for this purpose with an easy-to-use guide. Now, you can:

- search by title, author, or subject
- see whether a book is actually on the shelf and available for lending
- put a temporary hold on a book to be picked up within seven days

Thank you for your patience these past few months during the transition. We are so grateful to Molly Wilber and the other library volunteers for their perseverance and many hours of service.

## Connect with the Spiritual Renewal Center

Get social with the Spiritual Renewal Center and find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram today. You can also share your email address with us at [spiritualrenewalcenter.com](http://spiritualrenewalcenter.com) and get the latest information sent right to your inbox.



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