

Manresa House

We met recently with Fr. Jack Butler, SJ, to hear more about Manresa House, a “House of Inquiry.” Fr. Butler loves being a campus minister. In 2007 he was appointed Vocation Director for the New England Province of Jesuits. At Manresa House, Fr. Butler has found a way to combine his passion for campus ministry and the Society of Jesus.



Q: Manresa House officially opened this fall.

A: On November 1, we held an open house, which was well attended by students, members of the Boston College community, Fr. Thomas Regan, SJ, provincial from the New England Provincial Office, and vocation directors from religious communities and the Archdiocese of Boston. Attendees toured the house, enjoyed refreshments and heard about our new center for vocational discernment. Since then, we have had an appreciable number of activities!

Q: Manresa House is a collaboration between the Office of Campus Ministry at Boston College and the New England Province of Jesuits. Tell us more.

A: Manresa House was renovated to provide space for the Boston College community and the Society of Jesus. The house, designed for day and weekend programming, has three levels. The first is reserved for Boston College with areas for individuals to meet for spiritual direction and pastoral counseling, meeting areas for group discussions, a kitchen, and administrative offices. Upper levels

contain a prayer room and four bedrooms, which are reserved for the New England Province of Jesuits. Men who are interested in exploring religious life, discerning a vocation to the Society of Jesus and getting closer to Jesus are invited to come and stay for a weekend.

Q: You mentioned that your days are filled with appointments with students.

A: The primary purpose of Manresa House is to promote vocations to the Catholic Church. Students can make appointments for pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, but also drop in for quiet prayer with the Blessed Sacrament, peruse books and literature on religious life, have coffee or a soda with others who might



Tabernacle in the prayer room at Manresa House.

be interested in similar pursuits. Every person has a specific call from God, whether it is priestly, religious, married or single life. Campus ministry programs help students discern how God is calling them to fulfill their baptismal calling.

Q: What other types of programs are being offered?

A: We have a Vocation Group of students interested in religious life who meet once a month with University President Fr. William P. Leahy, SJ, for prayers and discussion. Fr. Leahy began the priesthood discussion group in 1998 and Manresa House is an extension of this outreach effort. Manresa House sponsors a “Who me?” series in cooperation with campus ministry. The series is a program of evening discussions for the Boston College community featuring prominent priests and religious men and women speakers. Speaking with a priest or other pastoral minister as well as friends continues to be the first step taken when considering ministry as a religious. Personal prayer and spiritual direction are also key components. We offer opportunities for all of these at Manresa House.



Laura Romeo assists Fr. Butler in the administration of Manresa House.

Q: What happens during an Inquiry Weekend?

A: Over the course of a weekend, a guest has the opportunity to meet with Jesuits and enjoy inserting himself into the fellowship and ministries of the Jesuit community. He can observe and participate in being a “contemplative in

action.” For example, the guest might accompany a Jesuit on his visit to a prison or school, and then return to the Jesuit community. I often visit the Italian Children’s Home to celebrate Mass and to spend time with the children and staff. A visitor may be assigned a Jesuit at Campion Center for discussion and discernment. Once a man has stayed

for the weekend, he can return as often as he wants. We hope to expand our weekends into longer stays, perhaps by offering a spring break program.

Q: How does your role of Vocation Director fit in?

A: The Society of Jesus in the United States is organized into ten provinces or regions. We are working together to develop consistent messaging and branding, and ways of broadening our outreach programs. A centralized approach, such as the Manresa House model, will help us to reach our goals of introducing more men to Jesus and being their companions in their search for spirituality.

Priesthood is a unique way of loving God and serving people, operating out of a great love of Jesus Christ.



Fairfield University Hosts Priestly Ordination of Joseph Palmisano, SJ



Joseph Redfield Palmisano, SJ, will be ordained to the priesthood on June 14, 2008, at the Chapel of St. Ignatius Loyola, Fairfield University by the Most Reverend William E. Lori, Bishop of Bridgeport. Deacon Palmisano, 33, comes from Monroe, Conn. Joe attended Fairfield Prep (‘93) and graduated from Boston College in 1997 with a B.A. in theology.

Joe entered the Society of Jesus on August 23, 1998, and pronounced vows on August 12, 2000. During his years of Jesuit formation, Joe did First Studies at Fordham University, earning an M.A. in Philosophical

Resources. After Fordham, he also earned a M.Phil. in ecumenical theology at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland (2002-03). Joe then spent two years at Campion College, Kingston, Jamaica, teaching religion and doing campus ministry, while living and serving pastorally at St. Anne’s Parish and Annotto Bay. In 2005 he returned to Ireland and graduated in 2007 with an S.T.L. degree in systematics/missiology from The Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy, also in Dublin. Since September, Joe has returned to Trinity College in Dublin to undertake doctoral studies in theology, with a concentration in Jewish-Catholic dialogue. Joe is also taking part in a two-year program in Spiritual Direction training sponsored by the Manresa Jesuit Retreat House in Dublin.