

"What to Expect" Email Sent 2 Weeks Out to Committed Retreatants

Everyone arrives for dinner on Friday night **(Date)** and stays through lunch on Sunday. Everyone has their own room. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served (the food is quite good for a retreat house.) Although it is suggested that each person contribute \$275 (which is the Retreat House's actual cost for you to be there), it's up to everyone to give what they can - either more or less. The money is collected on the Sunday at the end of the weekend.

If you have committed to coming, but decide that you can't make it, please let me know with a few days notice.

A few more points:

- This is a "silent retreat." Once dinner ends on Friday night, there is no talking outside of the scheduled prayers, lectures, and services until Sunday lunch. (You can say "pass the salt" at the dinner table, but not much more). This was a good thing for me for three reasons. First, since I'm surrounded by talking at work and home, the concept of no talking for 40 hours is quite appealing. Second, this meant that there was no touchy-feely "sharing" of our innermost thoughts and secrets with strangers, which I'm not big on. Third, it made me realize how much superfluous noise and distraction fills my life, and helped me see what I needed to eliminate in my life to make time for what is meaningful and lasting.
- The retreat director will do a quick 15 minutes after Friday dinner with "first timers." He will tell you that God has "one thing" to tell each of us during the retreat, and that the silence, prayer and contemplation opens our hearts and minds to receive that message. He said that we don't need to struggle to hear that one thing, that God will do all of the work for us to make sure we got the message as long as our hearts were open to it. Although I was skeptical, that was exactly what happened to me in an extremely powerful way, and it's happened each year that I've attended.
- The days are set up in a regimented way, with group prayers, lectures, services, and sacraments interspersed with private prayer and contemplation. You are free to go to whatever you want or to skip whatever you want. Some of the high points were 4 lectures and the Sunday mass homily. They were delivered by several Jesuits, each of whom was an amazingly powerful speaker who deeply touched each of us. Jesuits are special people.

You can also go to their site and read more - day by day schedule is on this link --

<http://www.loyola.org>