

ANNUAL REPORT JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020





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A note from Erin Maiorca Executive Director

Dear Bellarmine Benefactors,

As I reflect on the poignant images of the last year, I recall both the crosses and the presence of God amidst the

chaos. The blessings have come in many forms; you are among them. Thank you for saying "yes" to God's call to deeper relationship with Him at Bellarmine, for your prayers, and for your gifts and faith in our mission.

Though we closed four months early, we welcomed nearly four thousand retreatants this fiscal year. We had a wonderful start to the year, but everything changed in March. Covid-19 has challenged us to slow down and reflect on God's call. As a retreatant, you respond to that call. God chooses you and calls you to know Him, love Him, and love your neighbor.

We are grateful to reopen this fall. It is a joy to greet each of you as you enter the red front door for your long-awaited retreat. To rest in the quiet of Bellarmine, praying the *Spiritual Exercises* that enrich our relationship with Christ and help us to open our hearts, grow, discern, and heal.

As you page through this annual report, the generosity, love, and goodness of the Bellarmine community is evident. Gene, Darius, Maureen, and countless others demonstrate the impact of our work and the breadth of Bellarmine's reach. By continuing your support for this ministry, you shine as a light of Christ in the world, building up the Kingdom of God in our time. Thank you and God bless you!

In Christ's Love,

Coum Maiorca

Erin Maiorca

Executive Director

Our Mission

Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat
House is committed to fostering
the spiritual development of
Catholics and other people of faith
through a variety of retreats and
contemporary programs that are
grounded in the *Spiritual Exercises*of St. Ignatius of Loyola.



BELLARMINE

Jesuit Retreat House

Our Values

- Ignatian Spirituality for Adults & Youth
 - ▼ Silence
 - ★ Service to the Poor
 - ▶ Prayer
 - ★ Hospitality
 - ▼ Sacred Spaces



Ignatian Spirituality for Adults & Youth

Meet Darius Villalobos. Youth Minister & Kairos Leader

Darius Villalobos is on a mission. As the Director of Diversity and Inclusion for the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry, the 34-year-old is leveraging

his commitment to serve

diverse communities and young people. His goal: to help the Catholic Church become a more welcoming and inclusive community for all.

Darius attributes the joy he has today to many years of discernment and a willingness to place his life in God's hands. These are lessons he discovered on retreats at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House beginning in high school.

"I will never forget my first Kairos retreat in high school," says Darius, who went to Lane Technical College Preparatory High School and attended St. Mark Parish in Humboldt Park. "My grandpa, aunts, and uncles were all in ministry, so I grew up in church circles. But I never took that seriously as a vocation for myself. On that first retreat I started watching the retreat leaders and how they were interacting with us and it seemed so fun and fulfilling. I remember

thinking, 'Is this what people really do for a living?'"

Despite his admiration for the retreat leaders and their work, Darius had other ambitions. "I wanted to be a writer and an editor and was planning my life around my career," he says about his years in college at DePaul. At the same time, he volunteered with the parish youth ministry program. "I kept feeling this nagging pull."

That's when he was re-introduced to the North Side Kairos program that made it possible for him to attend a retreat at Bellarmine as a public school student. A collaborative, diversity-based effort by Chicago parishes, North Side Kairos brings together youth from around Chicago who otherwise would miss out on an experience offered to many of their Catholic school peers.

"I'll never forget the impact Bellarmine had on me," says Darius. "Here I was, this kid who grew up in the city, and we take this school bus away from all the concrete and grayness and suddenly everything is green and we're right in the middle of this beautiful nature. It was amazing."

"On the silent retreats, I learned that it is really important to listen to God," he says. "How can you do that if you are doing all the talking and filling the air with noise? When you go into silence, you are creating space for God to talk to you."

As a volunteer for North Side Kairos, Darius continues

Silence

to take young people back to Bellarmine with the hope that they will find the transformation and discernment he found.

"I tell them that it's important to get away if for no other purpose than to think about and work on their relationship with God," he says. "Retreats are such a good way to re-calibrate yourself and to get in touch with the feelings and emotions that are right below the surface."

"When I think of my own Kairos experience in high school, a ministry profession seemed so far away from what I imagined I'd ever be doing," says Villalobos. "But I now realize that God planted the seed in me way back then. I just needed to learn how to trust and to say yes. I now realize that God's plan for me was so much more exciting than anything I was planning." \(\mathbb{\textsq}

What is Found in the Silence

Regardless of where our retreatants come from, there is something to be found in the silence for everyone. Here, some of our weekend retreatants from the past year share what they have found in the silence.

"The silence gives me the chance to clear the clutter from my head and listen for that small, still voice. The talks have strengthened my spirituality and sobriety over the years." – David L., age 55

"Each year the Lord speaks and heals in unexpected ways, even when my soul feels distant or unreceptive – or perhaps especially then. These are special and precious experiences of encounter with Jesus." – Tony Q., age 61

"Every time I'm here I learn something new. God brings me something I didn't know I was seeking or needed. The silence and peace of this place are heart-filling and soul-giving." – Meredith W., age 35

About Our Silence-Seeking Weekend Retreatants

26% new to Bellarmine with an average age of

young adults (<40)

came from states plus Canada

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Service to the Poor

Before our renovation project began this spring, we contemplated what to do with the furniture we would be replacing. Bellarmine Buildings & Grounds Supervisor, Pat O'Hagan, made sure none of the furniture and materials would go to waste. We recycled 12,500 pounds of steel to do our part in caring for the environment. Read below to find out where these gently used items from the manor home landed.

Habitat for Humanity, McHenry (www.chicagolandhabitat.org)

In February, Habitat for Humanity picked up:

20 chairs 2 track lights 2 tables 2 doors

1 dresser 250 light bulbs

1 nightstand

Catholic Charities, Des Plaines (www.catholiccharities.net)

In April, our retreat house was closed to staff due to the stay-at-home order. All the dry food in our kitchen pantry was donated to Catholic Charities just as they were experiencing a food shortage due to COVID-19.

Shepherd's College, Union Grove, WI (www.shepherdscollege.edu)

In June, we discovered that Shepherd's College for students with intellectual disabilities was in need of furnishings for 25 new dorm rooms. It just so happened that we were clearing out furniture from 26 retreat rooms! We donated:

26 dressers 26 table lamps 26 nightstands 50 chairs

Chicago Furniture Bank (www.chicagofurniturebank.org)

In August, the Chicago Furniture Bank, which supplies furnishings to low-income families in the Chicagoland area, picked up the remaining items from the manor home retreat rooms:

> 30 bed frames 30 mattresses



Prayer

Meet Gene Croisant, Board Member & Retreatant

When Gene Croisant was a junior at Loyola University, his best friend invited him on a silent retreat at Bellarmine. He was initially skeptical and had no expectations. It certainly never crossed his mind that the weekend could change his life. "I thought I would go crazy from the quiet," says Gene. Now, he is grateful that he reluctantly told his buddy, "Okay, I'll try it."

Since 1957, Gene has attended 58 retreats at Bellarmine and served on the Board of Directors for 15 years. "It has become a very important part of my life," he says. "Somehow I found God and His role in my life. I found the retreat exceptionally valuable. I've continued to love Ignatian spirituality and the Jesuits my whole life." A year after graduation, Gene became Catholic.

For the next six decades, Gene forged a brilliant career in banking. But it is not in this success that Gene sees his legacy. Early in his career, he started finding his true purpose on the sidelines of the business world. "The Jesuits have inspired me to ask how I can best use my talents," he says. "The retreats gave me a sense of mission that it's not about the business, but your spiritual life. It is my responsibility to contribute to the well-being of others and, ultimately, society. For me, it means working to support Jesuit organizations and Bellarmine to create education and retreat experiences for others."

A former Infantry Captain with the US Army, Gene

was instrumental in launching Bellarmine's "Coming Home" retreats. The retreats have helped military men and women just like him reflect on the transitions to and from military life and find deeper meaning.



Gene and his wife, Barbara

Almost 20 years ago,

Gene's wife of 55 years, Barbara, was diagnosed with colon cancer that had metastasized to her liver. They turned to Bellarmine and prayer throughout their emotional journey. Fr. John Dillon, SJ, who served as Bellarmine's Director from 1999 – 2006, remembered the couple every day in prayer. Barbara has been cancer free for 19 years. "It was truly a miracle," says Gene. "There is no question that she was healed as a result of prayer."

These days, the couple volunteers to support other patients at Mayo Clinic Hospital in Phoenix. Gene brings his Wheaten Terrier to the chemotherapy clinic to comfort the 40 or so patients. "Many people tell me about the kind of dog they had as a kid or something about their childhood and school they went to. When the conversation takes a turn, I ask if it is okay if I can pray for them in my nightly prayers with my wife that evening. I've learned that we can get through anything with prayer, that we have to rely on the Holy Spirit."

Living Our Core Values

Hospitality

Meet Maureen Kennedy Barney, Retreatant & Ignatian Volunteer

As the oldest of six in an Irish Catholic family on the East Coast, Maureen Kennedy Barney's faith has influenced her life since the day she was baptized. How God cares for us and how we are called to care for others are themes that inspired Maureen's personal and professional life for the next six decades.

She graduated from Boston College, directed admissions for Seton Hall University, married her husband, Dan, and, 10 years ago, mourned his passing. She taught AP English and volunteered at the Career Transitions Center of Chicago. Now she is an Ignatian Volunteer Corps member, one of 65 men and women in Chicago who serve the marginalized. She has spent the last five years leading the Trinity Volunteer Corps, a volunteer site that brings adults with disabilities together through volunteerism at Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago.

It was her silent retreat at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat
House that clarified her purpose at this juncture in life. "At
Bellarmine, I realized God calls you to do different things
so many times in your life," says Maureen. "I never thought
I'd find myself in my seventies, retired, my husband
suddenly gone, life different than I thought it would be and
yet firmly believing that God had a purpose for me, a new
path to follow and ways to serve. I came to Bellarmine
looking for answers and open to hearing God's voice. I
discovered in the quiet that there are so many ways God

wants to use us to do good. My retreat helped me open up to the unexpected, what I was being called to next."

Since then, Maureen has attended several silent retreats at Bellarmine and three days a week attends mid-day Mass there.
She says, "Bellarmine gave me a place to



She says, "Bellarmine Maureen with a Trinity Volunteer Corps member

look back on my life, to understand what I needed to act on, how to see Christ in the stranger, how to serve with gratitude. Bellarmine offers a special space to encounter God in my daily living."

Her ministry today is inspired by Jesus' call to create a community that welcomes and honors all. At Old St. Patrick's, the group finds purpose in all their work... from folding weekly worship aids and assembling cheer bags for shut-ins, to greeting Mass-goers, assisting at special events, serving meals at the Ronald McDonald Houses, and preparing weekly food bags for the homeless.

"I feel blessed that what I've found at Bellarmine has allowed me to understand more clearly that I need to listen patiently for God's voice and then accept the grace He sends to do all I can to serve others."

Sacred Spaces

While our renovation project encompasses a wide scope of updates to infrastructure, we are most excited about the two projects below, which enhance our ability to welcome all people of faith to an encounter with the sacred.

Opening the Door to Hospitality

For folks who use a wheelchair, cane, or other mobility aid, the front entry was challenging to navigate. With a new entrance ramp and raised front patio, all retreatants will be able to enter at the red front door and experience the hospitality of the retreat house staff. Previously, those with mobility aids had to drive around the building and access the retreat house from the lower level.

The front hallway itself is now more accessible as well. The interior arched doorway was widened to be double the size of the original opening, so that folks of all abilities can easily navigate the front hallway.







Opening the Window to the Sacred

If you've ever stayed in the original manor home wing of the retreat house, you probably saw the old radiators which took up a great deal of space under each window in the retreatant rooms. With a new central air and heating system, we were able to remove the radiators. This allows us to place a comfortable chair near the window in each room.

Now, you'll be able to relax and enjoy the views of God's sacred creation from every retreat room!

The People

Number of Retreatants

Kairos/Youth Retreatants	1,270
Weekend Retreatants	1,224
Bellarmine Program Attendees	581
Special Event Retreatants	315
Private Retreatants & Spiritual Directees	228
Military Veterans	43
Virtual Retreatants	34
Total People Served	3,695

A Challenging Year

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone, to say the least. Between the COVID-19 stay-at-home order and the renovation project, our doors were closed to retreatants from mid-March through August. As a result, we lost about \$120,000 in revenue. There were nearly 900 people we thought we'd serve, but didn't:

- 6 Kairos Youth Retreats (approx. 345 people)
- 4 Weekend Retreats (258 people)
- 8 Special Event Retreats (approx. 225 people)
- 1 Individually Directed Retreat (approx. 40 people)
- 1 Veterans Retreat (approx. 20 people)



Meet Fr. Jim Strzok, SJ

Joining the Ministry Team and Jesuit Community this year is Fr. Jim Strzok, SJ. He comes to us with a varied background ranging from expertise in cosmology, Earth

sciences, chemistry and physics to extensive retreat ministry.

Fr. Strzok spent 13 years working with Sioux Indians in South Dakota before beginning a 33-year-long ministry in East Africa. His work there included helping to form religious women and clerics at a spirituality center as well as training religious and lay leaders to give the Spiritual Exercises at Mwangaza Retreat Center. In addition, Fr. Strzok oversaw development and buildings for the East African Province, heading up many construction projects.

Please make a point to introduce yourself to Fr. Strzok on your next visit to Bellarmine. He looks forward to meeting you and accompanying you on your retreat journey.

The Financials

Revenues

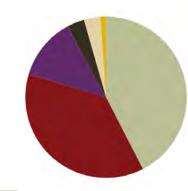
Regular weekend retreats	\$480,721
Special events	\$81,770
Other Bellarmine Retreats	\$84,457
Kairos retreats	\$260,462
Other revenue	\$29,226
Appeals, bequests & grants	\$224,970
Total Operating Revenues	\$1,161,606
Build on Our Foundation gifts	\$949,503
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Expenses

Total Operating Expenses	\$2,074,421
Retreat Masters & Ministry Staff	\$189,248
Utilities & Insurance	\$126,698
Benefits	\$281,130
Salaries & Wages	\$734,718
Dining Services	\$324,439
Administrative	\$187,194
Buildings & Grounds	\$230,994

The shortfall between revenue and expenses was made up by

Sources of Gifts



Annual Appeal \$95,470

Bequests & Stock \$83,736

Fussner Fund & Other Gifts \$27,949

Memorials \$7,900

Newsletter \$7,415

Grants \$2,500

drawing on the earned interest from our Ministry Investment Funds.

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† Deceased

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The Heart of Bellarmine Society

Members of the Heart of Bellarmine Society have made a planned gift to Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House or have advised that Bellarmine will be remembered in their estate plan. Their lifetime planning will help make it possible for Bellarmine to share Ignatian Spirituality for years to come.

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*Mr. and Mrs. James H. Beck are honorary members of the Society, having died before the Heart of Bellarmine Society was formed. Their lifetime gifts exceeded \$4 million and played a major role in the building of the Conference Center.

How You Can Help

- ► Pray for our ministry and the Bellarmine community
- ♣ Invite a friend or family member to join you on retreat
- ➤ Volunteer your time and talents in our office or gardens
- ➤ Support the 2020 Annual Appeal, which helps with our operating expenses
- Support our Capital Campaign

- ♣ Pray for the success of our 2020 Appeal and Capital Campaign
- Make a monthly recurring donation to Bellarmine
- ▲ Take advantage of new charitable giving tax laws allowing you to deduct \$300 in charitable gifts, even if you do not itemize deductions on your tax return
- ♣ Give appreciated stocks to Bellarmine
- ➤ Direct your IRA administrator to share all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution with Bellarmine
- Remember Bellarmine in your Will or Trust

Questions? Please contact Kathy Caudill in the Development Office (847-381-2719, kcaudill@jesuitretreat.org).

