

RETREAT THEMES/PROGRAMS BY MICHAEL CROSBY, OFMCAP

Below are various retreat themes that have been developed by Michael Crosby. You might use these as guides to informing people regarding an explanation of the retreat you have chosen. For more information contact Michael at 1015 N. Ninth Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233. The phone is (414) 271-0735, the FAX is (414) 271-0637 and the E-mail is mikecrosby@aol.com.

The Beatitudes and Discipleship

The core teachings of Jesus are the Beatitudes, yet most Christians cannot recount them. Instead very many still base their lives around the commandments. The beatitudes represent Jesus' vision of the life of a true believer, the way of an authentic disciple. Ideally this retreat should involve at least 10 conferences, preferably more. The beatitudes will be represented as the essence of Christian discipleship, containing the necessary tools for living authentically in our complex world. The inner, outer, and communal dimensions of life will be addressed to present a holistic, evangelically-grounded spirituality geared to living in our political economy and institutional church.

Heart Themes in Matthew's Gospel

In the scriptures the heart is the center of our very selves, of our thinking, feeling, and acting. Some of the themes Michael Crosby will address include: obstacles and opportunities to loving God and loving ourselves, the non-violent heart, hearts moved with compassion, purity of heart, the understanding heart, the forgiving heart, entering the heart of the earth, (in)fidelity in the heart, where your treasure is there is your heart, thinking evil in our hearts, lusting in the heart and not losing heart.

Moving from Control to Compassion

Using some themes of "Heart Themes in Matthew's Gospel," this retreat helps people discover where violence undermines the possibility of compassion in their lives. **This is ideal for a parish (we have a full program that can be adapted to prepare and execute the mission).** For a parish, the ideal is two tracks. The morning sessions (more informal and interactive) help the participants understand the causes and consequences of conflict and violence in our lives at the personal, relational and social levels as well as how life might be lived more caringly and non-violently in a way that leads to compassion. This includes understanding the causes of conflict, conflict resolution, reconciliation and peacemaking. The evening sessions address obstacles and opportunities to loving God and ourselves, choosing control or care in relationships, reconciliation and jubilee, and eucharist as the bond of compassion linking us with God, each other and the universe.

Letting Jesus Question Us: An Interactive Retreat around John's Gospel

This retreat is for advanced Catholics. Unlike the Synoptics which make the reign of God central, John's gospel makes Jesus and his love core to the spiritual life. This retreat builds around key questions Jesus asks in the fourth gospel. It offers the opportunity to become involved in the gospel itself, using an "interactive" method. Each day two extended periods will be offered containing: 1) private reflection around a

central text, 2) a lengthy reflection by Michael Crosby, 3) private reflection on the reflection, 4) small-group sharing of 1-3 followed by sharing in the wider group, 5) a ritualization. The goal of the retreat is to have the participants "make room in their hearts for the word."

Francis, Model of Discipleship

This retreat develops major themes, especially around Francis and his message for today. Included are conversion, Jesus as central to our life, the gospel, issues of violence, making peace, the practice of courtesy, searching for God, community, poverty/justice, joy and hope. Its goal is to offer a way of life that appeals especially to young people who want something different than the either/or approach to religion so prevalent in Catholicism today.

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit in Our Spiritual Lives

Each of the 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit are addressed in their biblical foundation and practical expression. Prayer forms are included as are references to parallel expressions in Buddhism. 13 Conferences.

The Subversive Prayer of Jesus

Traditionally the Lord's Prayer was taught catechumens only the night before their baptism. Why? Michael Crosby argues, in ten conferences, why Jesus' Prayer was originally to be kept secret. He takes each of the petitions and applies it to life today at the level of the individual, the group and especially as it challenges church and culture today.

Proclaiming the Gospel in a Wounded World

The core of Jesus' preaching, in the Synoptic Gospels, was the conversion needed to enter "Gospel of the Reign of God." Michael will address the contemporary implications of "the gospel." He will show how the "gospel story" can easily be compromised by the "story" that serves to justify unhealthy dynamics at the heart of the self-image and understanding of our nation, our church, our own lives and even that of the gospel itself. He will concentrate on the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of John, with its invitation to us to become a Church of the Beloved Disciple.

The Prophetic Character of Religious Life

Building on some of the themes found in his well-received book, *Can Religious Life Be Prophetic?*, Michael Crosby will probe more deeply the universal call to holiness and the unique challenge of religious life in our society and church today. He will also develop the need for communities of resistance to support the celibate way of life demanded by this consecration. He will offer a refreshingly new way of addressing the three "evangelical" vows as well.

Weekend Retreat/Workshop Addressing Violence In Our Hearts

Increasingly people are trying to find ways to address conflict and violence in and around us. Michael offers insights he has gained from working with groups around issues of the sources of violence in and among us, power dynamics as control or

compassion, conflict resolution, reconciliation, making peace, covenants, and the need for communities of trust. It is highly recommended that communities, councils, living groups, etc. participate in this with as many members as possible.

Weekend Advent Retreat

This retreat builds on the first two chapters in Matthew's gospel, the infancy narratives. It discusses our genealogy, angels, finding our names, seeking the child, violence, grieving the child, withdrawal and coming home.

Holy Week Triduum

Using the liturgy and its themes, the "Seven Last Words" of Jesus are intertwined in reflections and rituals. Ideally this retreat should begin on Wednesday evening of Holy Week. Besides the usual liturgical rituals, there will be a Wednesday evening ritual around betrayals in our lives. Thursday morning includes a contemporary footwashing, Thursday supper is a Seder; Friday morning will be stations of the cross; the evening will offer a communal form of reconciliation.

Mary as Model

This weekend retreat tries to free participants from past images of Mary that have effectively reinforced the image of women as submissive to men or uncritical of patriarchy. We will consider themes around Mary and her time(s), Mary in Luke's Gospel (stressing her Magnificat), Mary in John's Gospel and the Matthean Mary as the one who did God's will and models justice for us.