



Christ the King Spring Newsletter

2024



MAY THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST BE ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS

Jesus affirms his presence in our lives when we are together: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." – Gospel of Matthew: 18:20

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I trust this message finds each of you in good health. As some of you may already know, I am honored to assume the role of Retreat Center Director at Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center, succeeding Natalie Svistoonoff who gracefully stepped down at the end of December after four years of excellent service. Natalie has been instrumental in facilitating a smooth transition into my new position, and her dedication along with the unwavering support of the office and kitchen staff, has been crucial in upholding the Passionist mission, especially during the challenging years marked by the pandemic.

Allow me to share a bit about myself. I was born the 11th of thirteen children in The Netherlands—eight boys and five girls. My family immigrated to the USA in 1956, settling in Southern California. Our roots lie in dairy farming. I have been a Passionist for 53 years, a priest for 46 years, and a member of Christ the King Passionist Community for eight.

My journey has taken me through various roles, including six years as vocation director in Chicago, IL, nine years as Pastor of an African American parish, grade school, and high school in Birmingham, AL, followed by nine years as superior and formation director of the Passionist Community of India. Upon returning to the States, I served 12 years as the retreat director of Holy Name Passionist Retreat Center in Houston, TX. From 2015 to 2023, I was twice elected to serve as the Provincial of the Western Province of USA,

Holy Cross Province, concluding my term on June 10, 2023. I am grateful to have enjoyed a six-month sabbatical before having the privilege, at the age of seventy-four, to serve as your Retreat Center Director.

A retreat center, devoid of retreatants and volunteers, is merely a building. Yet, with the collective efforts of you, our dedicated staff, and the Passionist community, it transforms into a sacred space where miracles unfold. Countless individuals find healing, and these grounds become a sanctuary—a place of renewal where one can sense God's loving and merciful presence, fostering a sense of belonging. Christ the King is where people rediscover their connection to the Catholic Faith.

Your ongoing support and prayers form the foundation for envisioning a future where many more can experience the miracles that God seeks to share in those lives who are most in need of His love and mercy. Together, we will discover Christ in our midst.

The Passionist Community and our committed staff at Christ the King pray that you may experience a blessed Lent and Easter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Joe Moons, C.P.
Fr. Joe Moons, C.P.
Retreat Center Director



Christ the King Highlights

Farewell to Fr. Jack and Natalie...

In November 2023, Fr. Jack Conley, CP relocated to the Passionist Community at CTU (Catholic Theological Union) in Chicago, after serving 4 years at Christ the King as the Center's Director of Ministry. Fr Jack's presence and ministry will be missed.



Natalie Svistoonoff stepped down as Executive Director of the retreat center at the end of December 2023 in order to focus on family matters. She served as Executive Director for four years. She led the Center through many challenges and opportunities over the years including fire marshal requirements, remodels and a global pandemic, just to name a few. Her sense of gratitude, love, and community far surpasses the challenges. Natalie's faith and commitment to the mission of the Passionist charism was very present during her time here at the Center. We wish Natalie the best!



Welcome Fr. Welfen Xavier

Fr. Welfen Xavier, CP, joined the CTK community in October 2023. Fr. Welfen is a native of India and comes from THOM Vice Province of Passionists in India. He entered into the Passionists seminary in 2001 and was ordained in May 2014. While serving in India, he assisted with seminary formation, was a parish pastor and carried out on-call ministry as needed. He has two brothers who live with his parents in his homeland of Kochi, Kerala, India. He enjoys cooking, reading, and spending time with friends. He is assisting on the CTK retreat team and also with Thursday Mass. He is interested in helping with Parish ministry, and he is open to new areas of possibilities at the Retreat Center. Welcome Fr. Welfen!



Fall Gala 2023: Our sixth Annual Fall Gala, The Roaring Twenties, was held on October 7, 2023. The event included Mass, a social, dinner, silent and live auctions, and dancing. Many thanks to all who supported our Gala event by donating, volunteering, and/or by attending the Event. The Fall Gala is the largest fundraiser for the Center. We look forward to our next Gala on Saturday, October 5, 2024. **Save the Date!**



Christ the King Highlights Cont.

CTK Guild Christmas Luncheon

Our CTK Guild held their annual Christmas luncheon and fundraiser on December 12, 2023. The theme this year was Honoring our Blessed Mother Mary & Her Apparitions. Lunch was prepared by the Center's chefs, Anoud Zaki and Deanna Jensen. In addition to many guests, CTK staff and the Passionist community attended.



Simbáng Gabi Celebrations

CTK hosted Simbáng Gabi, a Filipino tradition, December 15-23. Simbáng Gabi (Filipino for "Night Mass") is a devotional, nine-day series of Masses in anticipation of Christmas and to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. Fellowship followed mass. A special thank you to ALL guests who made the event a success!

We're Hiring

Director of Spanish Ministries

Assistant Cook

Inquire by email at christtheking@passionist.org or by phone at 916-725-4720, ext. 301

Development News

Supporting Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center

Thank you for your continued support of Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center!

The Center is dedicated to sustaining the vision of our founder, St. Paul of the Cross, by offering retreats and ministry activities intended to provide spiritual renewal and growth. Donations provide support to on-going programs, provide retreat scholarships, and care for the beautiful buildings, gardens and grounds at Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center.



Ways to Give to CTK

Monthly Giving: Recurring donations are a great way to help us plan for the future. If you are already giving monthly, please consider increasing your gift.

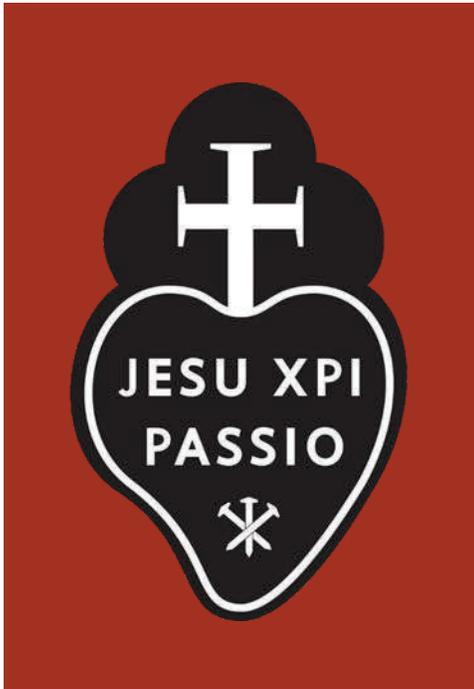
Fr. Ray McDonough Scholarship Fund: Scholarships allow retreatants who have a financial hardship to experience a Passionist Retreat.

The Gift of Time - Volunteer at CTK: There are several volunteer opportunities at Christ the King. Opportunities include Weekend Retreat Host/Hostess, General Event Support, Parish Coordinator, and Grounds/Maintenance.

To learn more about ways to give to Christ the King, go to our website at www.christthekingretreatcenter.org or contact Sandra Gill in the Development Office at 916-725-4720, ext. 302 or sgill@passionist.org

Interested in receiving our weekly Passionist Charism Reflection and Retreat Center Updates?
Email sgill@passionist.org

Give, and it will be given to you. (Luke 6:38)



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Upcoming Programs and Events in 2024

Easter Triduum



March 28-31

“... do not be anxious about your life...Consider the lilies of the field,”
-Matthew 6:25-28

**“Come and you will see!”
Weekend Retreat
Led by Fr. Enno Dango, CP**



May 3-5

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Institute for the Study of the Passion

Led by Fr. Tom Bonacci, CP
Thursdays 10:00am-11:30am
Spring: April 4, 18, May 2
Summer: July 11 & 18

Recovery Retreats

Women: May 10-12 /Fr. Tom Bonacci, CP
Sept 27-29/Fr. Tom O’Neill, SJ
Men: Sept 13-15 /Fr. Tom Weston, SJ

Summer Fiesta – Sunday, June 2
Silent Retreat – June 3-7
Married Couples Retreat – July 12-14
Fall Gala – Saturday, October 5

For information on retreats, call 916-725-4720 ext. 301
or go to www.christthekingretreatcenter.org