

CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS

A place for solitude, prayer and reflection

Hermitage Retreat Center Sponsored by the Congregation of St. Joseph Winter, February 2018

Ambassadors for Christ in the Wilderness

Christ in the Wilderness is looking for volunteers to be an ambassador for CITW. What is a CITW Ambassador? The Ambassador would be an advocate that helps us spread the word about CITW. He or she would promote the benefit of a CITW retreat experience and share with friends, colleagues, family on social networks.

I would send out suggested postings that you could share on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or any other social network platform. The post can be copied as is or edited to fit your own dynamic. Posts would be sent to the ambassador no more than once a week, and probably less frequently. You can share as you have the opportunity. An ambassador can also share the posts that are seen on the Christ in the Wilderness Facebook page.

When you share, many more people will hear about the benefits and blessedness of Christ in the Wilderness. If you would like to be an advocate for CITW, let me know. I will email you the posts.

Christmas Concert

On Sunday, December 10, 2017, we had a beautiful concert by Luke and Sarah Windham. We had delicious food, which all enjoyed.



Great auction items were taken home by the winners. Everyone enjoyed the Nazareth Academy space for our benefit this year.

A special thanks goes out to all who pitched in to set up and make the day run smoothly. We appreciate all who came out that day to celebrate and have fun with us. It was a successful day and we look forward to seeing you again next year. The date is December 2, 2018.

Spaghetti & Meatball Dinner Fundraiser

We had a delightful evening with the dinner at Holy Cross Parish Hall in Stockton, IL on February 17, 2018. We served 150 meals and many people stayed around to visit with friends throughout the evening. Thanks to all the volunteers that helped out with the serving, food preparation and desserts. God bless all of you. Looking forward to an even better time next year.

Sr. Lorraine Mark, CSJ

Most of you probably received the news from various sources that Sr. Lorraine Mark, CSJ died on Dec. 1, 2017. Below is her biography that was shared at the time of her death. We invite you to pray for the continued success of the ministry she started at Christ in the Wilderness. Memorials can be made to Christ in the Wilderness in Sr. Lorraine's name. God bless you.

Entered this life ~ March 9, 1935

Entered the Founding Congregation of LaGrange
August 15, 1955

Entered Eternal Life ~ December 1, 2017

Lawrence and Eileen Mark had two children. Kenneth was their first child and Lorraine, who was born in Berwyn, IL, on March 9, 1935, their second. The family moved to Downers Grove, IL where both Kenneth and Lorraine attended St. Joseph Parish School. Lorraine was the life of the party as she moved through grammar school and on to Nazareth Academy. Their home was the

scene of many parties with Lorraine the perfect hostess.

Upon graduating from Nazareth, Lorraine decided to go to the College of St. Theresa in Winona, MN, even though there were five young men seeking to marry her. After one year of college, she surprised everyone, especially her suitors, by entering the Sisters of St. Joseph in La-Grange Park in September of 1954.



She received the habit and the name Sr. Mary Kateri in August of 1955. She earned a B.A. from Rosary College, majoring in English, and also received her M.A. in English from Loyola. She put these degrees to good use in her early years, teaching English at Nazareth Academy and St. Paul High School. Her wonderful sense of humor and her warm and welcoming personality helped make her an outstanding teacher. But she was being called in another direction by her community to work with the Formation Team and to pursue training in pastoral education and spirituality.

Another calling began to take shape after her six months sabbatical alone in the mountains of Colorado where she “experienced the profound importance of solitude.” This quote, and the passages that follow, are from Sr. Lorraine’s own brief history of Christ in the Wilderness, which is the name of the place she established “to nurture an environment that is conducive for silence, solitude, prayer and reflection. It is hoped that retreatants will experience movement toward a deepened awareness of self, creation and the Holy.” The name of Christ in the Wilderness was suggested to Lorraine by a Jewish man with whom she shared the story of her dream.

In 1980, the down payment was made on the 80 acres in the Stockton area which now make up Christ in the Wilderness. Through determination, dedication and hard work, Sr. Lorraine went about raising funds, overseeing the construction and working the land to help make the dream come true.

In 1983, quoting Sr. Lorraine, “Mariglen, our first hermitage, was built due to a grant from the

Raskob Foundation and other donations. . . . In the years that followed two more hermitages were added and a chapel built.

“ . . . After 16 years of this, even rough and tough workers who drive in here, feel the difference on these 80 acres. The land has been seasoned and blessed over the years by all who spend time here and it is palpable. Alleluia!”

During her years at Christ in the Wilderness, she cared for her mother who came to live with her in this sacred place. There was another companion for both of them—the beautiful, well-behaved dog named Blue. Later, after Blue’s death, Lorraine got a second dog named Mariah, a treasured friend for Lorraine.

However, once again Lorraine’s life drastically changed. Lorraine ended up leaving Christ in the Wilderness for others to maintain as she continued to deal with the stroke that she suffered in the year 2000. She became a resident of Resurrection Life Center where she faced many physical challenges and found new ministries—that of welcoming our sisters and helping them adjust to the Center and to keeping the residence of Resurrection laughing with her many well-repeated jokes. “Did you hear the joke of the cat and mice?” she was often heard asking, “or the woman with the four husbands?”

We imagine her organizing God’s parties, sharing humor and warmth with others—from those early days in Downers Grove, through her teaching days, formation years, Christ in the Wilderness adventures and Resurrection Life Center and finally to joining St. Kateri, her mom and dad, her brother Kenneth, five suitors, hundreds of students, benefactors and friends. We see her with a smile on her face and a joke about to be told, and all heaven breaking into laughter.

In the Wilderness....

Don’t forget to schedule your retreat for the rest of the year. Some months are already filling up quickly. Have a grace filled Lent. God bless you. Peace, Sr. Julia

Openings:

Check our website: www.citwretreat.com for updates when openings are available.