

# *The CanTicle*

OF THE CAPUCHIN RETREAT CENTER



**SPRING** NEWSLETTER 2025





# SUMMER 2025

## at the Capuchin Retreat Center



**PRIVATE/DIRECTED  
RETREAT**  
June 16–20, 2025



**HISPANIC DAY OF  
REFLECTION**  
June 21, 2025



**SISTERS' RETREAT  
WEEK**  
June 23–28, 2025



**ICONOGRAPHY  
RETREAT**  
July 6–12, 2025



**LAY MINISTERS  
RETREAT**  
August 18–19, 2025



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## From the DIRECTOR

We are pleased to bring you another edition of The Canticle. The response that I've heard has been overwhelmingly positive, with people eager to show both their friends and neighbors the wonderful stories, images and news of events happening here at Capuchin Retreat Center. I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone for your feedback, your support, your prayers, and your concern after my accident. I am pleased to tell you that I am back ministering at the retreat center once more.

I pray that you enjoy this spring edition of our magazine and get a chance to visit us here to see all the wonderful things happening this year.

**Fr. Vito Martinez, OFM Cap.**  
Director of Capuchin Retreat Center



**Fr. Vito recalls the story of his life-altering biking accident one fateful afternoon on a warm Fall day late October of 2024.**

The year 2024 was supposed to be a year of pilgrimage for Fr. Vito, as he traveled for the first time to the city of Lourdes and then to Fatima. However, soon after his return, the Lord would have him undertake another difficult journey as he rehabilitated from a life-altering biking accident.

On the 28th of October, Fr. Vito was pleased to see that the weather was still in the 70's. He decided to take his mountain bike to the local park where, that afternoon, he suffered a fall and landed directly on his helmet.

"When I landed, I lost all feeling from my neck down," Fr. Vito recalls. "I remember looking up at the leaves, unable to move, and having a difficult time breathing." Later, doctors would tell him that he had fractured 5 vertebrae and bruised his spinal cord, resulting in paralysis.

In spite of the severity of the injury however, Fr. Vito recalls a sense of peace in the moment: "I was aware that I couldn't move and that it was hard to breathe, but I felt comforted and peaceful. It was as if I were embraced in a sense of gratitude and mercy. I was not afraid."



**"A lot of my time in the hospital was about being thankful. I was happy to be alive."**

In January of 2025, he returned to the retreat center in a limited capacity. As of March, Fr. Vito has returned to preaching and assuming the role of being the director of the retreat center. He continues to heal and gain wisdom from the difficult experience, but remains grateful in spite of the lingering weakness in his right arm.

A fellow mountain biker called 911 and emergency responders arrived to take Fr. Vito to the hospital. After praying with others around him, he slowly regained feeling. The EMS rushed Fr. Vito to ICU and he remained in the hospital for three weeks.

"A lot of my time in the hospital was about being thankful. I was happy to be alive, I was excited every time I could move a bit more, and I was grateful for all the prayers." Three days after the accident, Fr. Vito was able to walk with the assistance of a walker. Two weeks after the accident, he was doing physical therapy to regain his strength.

After being discharged from the hospital, Fr. Vito moved to St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit to continue his recovery. He was still unable to use his right hand and required assistance for basic human needs. Little by little, mobility and strength returned.

**During his time in the hospital, he wrote some of his thoughts:**

"Find opportunities to give thanks to God... even if things seem difficult; especially when things seem difficult! If you are frustrated or angry because of a friend or a loved one, give thanks to God because of the power of love! If you feel tired or weak, give thanks to God that the very act of breathing sustains us! If the path before you is difficult, and you are angry with God because life seems cruel or unfair, I implore you to give thanks to God for your faith and for that feeling that tells you that this ought to be a better world and that God truly loves you...even if you cannot see the fullness of His perfection at this moment!"

Fr. Vito remains eternally grateful for your support and prayers. His recovery has been difficult, but he has found God's grace in this unique journey.





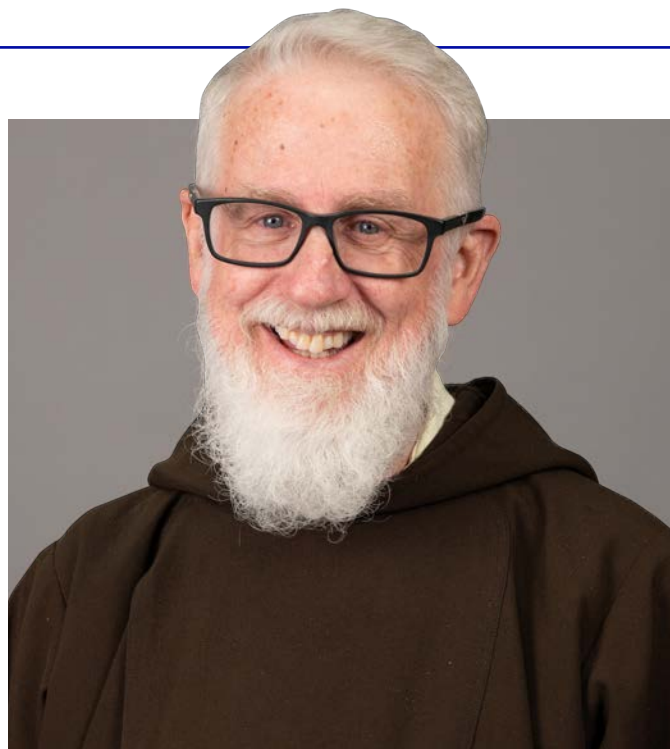
# TENDING CREATION

## *A Labor of Love*

### History of the Landscape

When Capuchin Retreat Center began in 1968 it was built on farm land, a far cry from the sanctuary we know today. Our Capuchin founders, Fr. Simon Hess and Fr. Vernon Wagner are the one's who are largely responsible for transforming the grounds into the beautiful environment we see around us. Fr. Vernon in particular was responsible for digging our pond and planting the trees.

Fr. Vernon received our trees from the state conservation corps which was known for providing seedling trees to help create wildlife habitats. A useful resource, for a budding retreat center to be sure, but what was unknown at the time, was that some of the shrubs that the corps provided revealed themselves to be an invasive species.



*Article by Br. John Scherer*



Br. John Scherer (left) shares a hot cup of coffee with Br. Julius Milton (right) after a chilly day of working on the Capuchin Retreat landscaping.

**The Principal Offenders Are:** Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*); Oriental or Chinese Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*); Multiflora or Japanese Rose (*Rosa multiflora*); and Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) which were all introduced to the United States in the 19th century. They provide dense growth for birds and other animals and have edible fruits. The seeds from these fruits are what are spread by the birds. More recently, the 'Bradford' Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Bradford') and other cultivars are escaping into the wild and becoming invasive.

### What We're Doing About It

During a men's retreat in the fall of 2023, a retreatant, Curt Rogers, noticed the invasive species problem and talked to Fr. Vito Martinez about what could be done. Curt is the owner of a habitat and land management company which helps people reclaim the landscape from invasive plants and establish native plants again.



Together with the friars, we worked to identify a six and a half acre plot behind the first stations of the cross that was occupied by these invasive plants. Curt brought in his brush cutting machine and cleared it all. He also widened the retreat center trails that were being encroached on by the invasive plants. After keeping them in check over the summer, Curt then sowed prairie grasses and wildflowers in the space to reestablish some more useful native plants. Milkweeds were also included to help our lovely monarch butterflies.

I have been consulting with Fr. Vito and Curt. After graduating from the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign with a degree in Ornamental Horticulture, I came to Detroit to work at the Belle Isle greenhouses for a few years before joining the Capuchins in 1980. Since then, I have always cherished working on landscapes wherever I have ministered: Detroit, Milwaukee, Panama, Mt. Calvary, WI, Chicago, and now here at the Capuchin Retreat Center. I am hoping to enhance and create more beauty here at Capuchin Retreat for all our retreatants.

We are optimistic that by working together as friars and retreatants alike, we can continue to enhance and create more beauty here at Capuchin Retreat Center for all of our visitors for years to come. Please pray for us as we continue this process.





# *The Importance of* **RETREATS**

**Most of us have probably heard of a retreat, but what exactly are they and how do they affect our spiritual lives?**

The word “retreat” has a detailed meaning. It is often described as a period of time spent away from one’s day-to-day life to reflect and focus on spiritual growth and prayer in a quiet and secluded setting as they reconnect with God. For us Catholics, a retreat is also a time to cleanse ourselves and be liberated of our past sins through confession and counseling, leading to a personal emptying and a transition through which we are reoriented.

Retreats can offer us a valuable opportunity for introspection, renewal, and a deeper connection with both oneself and God. They provide a space for not only reflection, but also for relaxation and rejuvenation during times of high stress or transitional periods. During a retreat, we experience a renewal of both heart and soul. We see the world around us and within us with new eyes and are drawn to a closer personal relationship with Christ.



*Article by Br. Benoy Joseph*

Only by leaving our daily life behind may we find the time to recharge and rediscover ourselves. While often difficult to carve this time out of our busy schedules, doing so provides a unique experience that encourages us to further examine which aspects of our lives truly need attention.

## **Different Kinds of Retreats**

Taking a weekend or even a day-long retreat at a retreat center is significantly distinct from other places to which we might withdraw. During these times, a person deliberately visits sacred spaces to be better attentive to God’s voice as they realign their hearts and minds with His purpose.

Retreat centers offer a variety of different options such as private retreats, or those done in a group that allow us to form bonds with one another. These retreats can often be categorized as personal, professional, or spiritual. To make them fruitful, they encourage

connection with God, oneself, and with nature. Retreat centers offer a safe environment for this interaction as we challenge our limited beliefs and foster inner healing.

## **How a Retreat Can Change Us**

Whenever we’re aiming to be more productive or effective at what we do, we must always consider our life’s purpose and our personal values, vision and mission. A retreat can be a life-changing experience that allows us to do this. Only through a place of peace, personal growth and a fresh perspective can one make a full transformation in the journey of life. Retreating in body, mind and soul, we can rejuvenate and better unite ourselves with our omniscient and omnipotent God who wills all things for our good.

Consider a retreat today. With a renewed purpose and focus on our values, we form a strong bond once more with God and one another, and that’s what our life plan need be.





# Support the Capuchin Retreat Center!

We welcome contributions of any size. All are acknowledged and are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Capuchin Retreat is a ministry of the Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph. We thank God ahead of time for your love, prayers and generous contributions.

### Donate through the mail:

Capuchin Retreat Center, 62460 Mt. Vernon Rd., Washington, MI 48094

### Donate from a bank account:

Use your bank's bill pay program to set up a one-time or recurring gift.

### Donate with a credit/debit card:

Please visit our website at [www.capretreat.org/give-now/](http://www.capretreat.org/give-now/) or scan the QR Code to the right to make a one-time or recurring donation in support of the retreat center.



# Don't Miss our NEXT EVENTS!

## GOUDA EVENING FUNDRAISER



Sunday, June 8, 2025 | 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Join us at the Capuchin Retreat Center for our 4th annual summer fundraiser on Sunday, June 8 with libations, cheese, dinner, and great times! This event features live music in the garden, guided tours of the property and our facilities, a live auction and raffle drawings! Tickets just \$75.

Scan the QR Code or visit: [ofmcap.cc/goudaevening2025](http://ofmcap.cc/goudaevening2025)



## 2025 CAPUCHIN GOLF CLASSIC



Saturday, September 27, 2025 | 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Hit the links at Twin Lakes Golf Club in Oakland Twp to support the Capuchin Retreat Center and the Solanus Casey Center! Your \$150 registration includes 18 holes of golf with a cart, in a 4-person scramble format with a continental breakfast, hotdog at the turn, 3 drink tickets, and a pasta buffet following golf.

Scan the QR Code or visit: [ofmcap.cc/golfclassic2025](http://ofmcap.cc/golfclassic2025)



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## CAPUCHIN RETREAT CENTER

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