



ALL THINGS IGNATIAN

Celebrating Mission at Creighton University

Campus Ministry Retreats: An Invitation to Greater Awareness

How “Pausing and Noticing” Facilitates Spiritual Growth

Brittany Hall
Campus Ministry Retreats Coordinator
BrittanyHall@Creighton.edu

“Open, Present, & Embracing”



“This weekend, I confronted past issues that have led me astray from God and opened my heart to God again, reconciliation/forgiveness of myself, gratitude for God’s love.”

Our Encounter with Christ Retreat is held three times each year, allowing 180 sophomores, juniors, and seniors to reflect on mature questions of faith, such as “Who is God?” and “How am I called to love others because of the way God loves me?”

Campus Ministry offers a variety of retreats throughout the year, from one starting the year just for first-year students, to one that ends the year just for graduating seniors. We offer a guided, silent retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius as well as an outdoor retreat involving hiking, biking, camping, and reflection on our relationship to God’s creation. We also have an on-campus retreat series focused on discernment as well as our very popular Encounter with Christ Retreat. While open to students of any faith tradition or spiritual background, each retreat weekend is rooted in Creighton’s Catholic, Jesuit tradition and encourages participants, through opportunities for prayer, reflection, and conversation, to be present with and attentive to the Divine, themselves, and each other. Over 450 students, faculty, and staff participate annually, with 81 serving as student leaders and coordinators. As one student said, *“My retreats here have shown me that true community is where God makes the Trinity tangible, where we can understand what communion with God is all about. Faith is inherently relational, and these weekends are a beautiful reminder of how to live that out.”*

In 2018-2019, students wrote the following to describe their spiritual growth after participating in or leading a retreat:

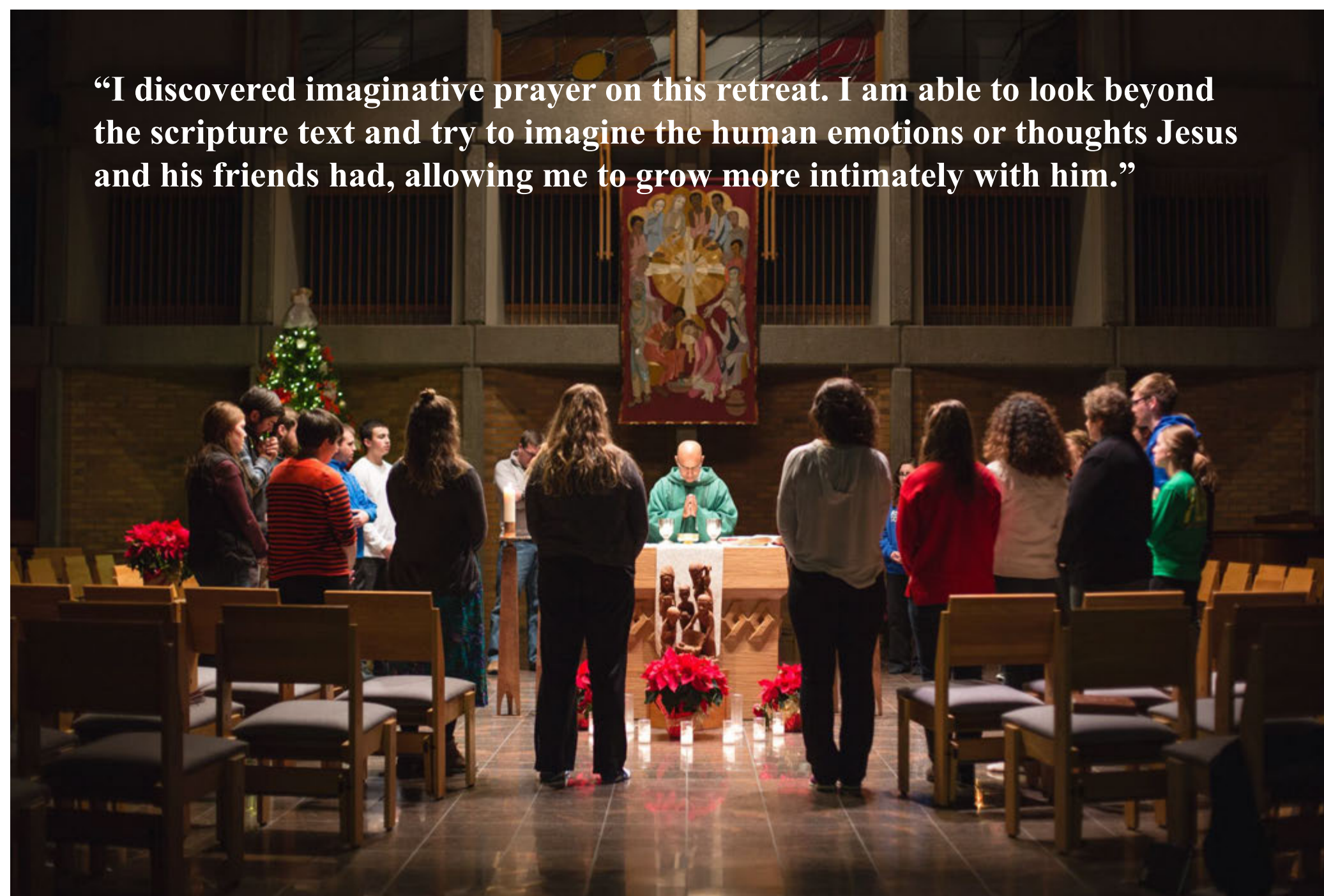
“I now know God is present with me in my failures and I have the motivation to enter experiences with more courage, even if failure is a possibility. I will keep trying to find God in every person I encounter.”

“This retreat showed me that most of us are going through similar experiences, and that we can use our faith to support each other. Also, there is really just something amazing about praying with other people – it deepens my own faith and creates a feeling of togetherness.”

“I’ve learned that I am worthy of God’s love and that we must let go of fear because fear is not of God. I know I can let God’s love show through me.”

“I realized that I don’t have to put all this pressure on myself to be Christ’s hands and feet at all times in all that I do. I am one part of Christ’s body, and I just need to keep trying a little more every day to illuminate His light.”

Discernment, Freedom, & Imagination



“I discovered imaginative prayer on this retreat. I am able to look beyond the scripture text and try to imagine the human emotions or thoughts Jesus and his friends had, allowing me to grow more intimately with him.”

Spending three full days in guided silence following the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, participants on the Ignatian Silent Retreat explore new forms of prayer, including Gospel Contemplation.

‘Walk Slowly & Bow Often’

Following St. Ignatius’ wisdom, a central element of how we guide students to engage in, learn from, and grow in their lives even after our retreats is to invite them into a new way of living, a new pace of moving through the world while they are on retreat. This slowed, quiet pace is countercultural; it disrupts the contemporary urge to fill our lives with the noise of busyness, distractions, and social media-induced isolation and instead draws students intentionally into weekends that balance unhurried contemplation with communal experiences of trust, acceptance, and vulnerability.



“This retreat taught me to talk about faith and spirituality in new, confident ways. Moving forward, I want to build these things into my daily life and conversations.”

Participants on the Fall Adventure Retreat, held in South Dakota’s Black Hills, share their spiritual journeys and discover how to find God in all things, including our natural world.

As these responses show, too, the impact of our retreats on students daily living is clear. Students truly leave retreats seeking to discover how they can use their gifts in service of God and others:

“During this retreat, I grew in my ability to discern my daily emotions, feelings, and decisions on a deeper level. In doing so, I have discovered more purpose in my life and clarity in God’s plan. I have found a lifelong spirituality and I am forever grateful.”

“I believe, I could implement my experiences in every aspect of my life; whether it is in being present with friends, advocating for my patients, or most importantly, letting others reveal God’s presence to me, I feel so much more prepared to live my faith.”



MISSION WEEK