God, help me to be open to you in this retreat and in my life.
Hospitality, Welcome and Housekeeping Notes

○ Parking
  - The best places to look for spaces are in the "Chapel Lot," which is located between St. Mary’s Chapel and the Fire Station, and in the Breen Center Center Lot, located on the south side of Lorain Avenue, just west of and behind the Breen Center for the Performing Arts. This lot can be accessed off both Lorain and West 30th. Both these lots welcome visitors. In previous years parking in the student lot across from Sullivan Gym during school hours was not allowed. Students need a permit to park there, and the lot is usually full. This year security guards will allow you to park in an empty space if you tell them you are here for a SPA retreat. In the evening parking is discouraged on Carroll Ave. and on W. 30th between Carroll and Bridge Avenues. We strive to maintain good relations with our neighbors! During the morning retreats, you may park on any side streets South of Lorain Ave. or in St. Patrick’s Church lot at 3602 Bridge Ave., a short walk to campus.
  - Parking Map is in your binder

○ Bad Weather
  - We follow the school schedule. If school is cancelled, (check our website) then SPA is cancelled. School begins at 8:00 a.m. and our morning session starts at nine. If school is delayed more than an hour than SPA will be delayed until the new school start time.

○ Absentees
  - Please call your small group director or Colleen Wyszynski (216-961-2583) ahead of time, if possible. Attendance and fidelity to your prayer commitment is vital to your own and the group’s retreat experience.

○ Refreshments
  - Coffee, tea and bottled water will be available during breaks

Restrooms
  - Restrooms are located in the chapel basement. You can access them via the stairs or elevator located off the north end of the narthex.

○ Retreat Expenses
  - Our retreat program uses a very small percentage of the total Saint Ignatius High School budget. A very small percentage of 20 million dollars however is still a real number. We use a small share of this building, the heating, cooling, office supplies, computer resources, parking lot, security, lighting and so on. This cost is less than $20 a week for each of you, about $150 for the entire retreat. We don’t charge any fee because make the Spiritual Exercises accessible is too important. We will, however, ask for your help near the end of the retreat.
GUIDELINES FOR FAITH SHARING GROUPS

1. Remember confidentiality.

2. Practice unconditional acceptance / non-judgmental listening.

3. Everyone is free to share from their unique life and prayer experience.

4. Listen reverently and prayerfully to each other.

5. Trust God’s presence and the Spirit’s guidance in the group.

6. Leave problem-solving and teaching to God.

7. Expect differences as your relationship within Sacred Mystery is unique. There’s no wrong way to pray.

8. Silence is a part of the sharing process, full of God’s Self-Communication.

9. Share the time so all may fully participate.

10. Practice loving one another as God loves.
In my day job, I am writing a programmer's guide on how to overcome the problems in computer data management when we enter the next millennium. How come, then, I am sitting here reflecting on the ways in which the insights of a man who lived 450 years ago in a remote Basque village in northern Spain affect the way in which we relate to God today, on the threshold of the 21st century? I sometimes think that my PC will give a little shudder of culture shock when I expect it to process my thoughts on the problems of two-digit notation and the search for my deepest desire at the same time.

This coming together of two worlds apparently so far removed from each other is perhaps in itself a pointer to some of the treasures that are ours today through the legacy of Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus, which he founded. If we can imagine his browsing through this book, or sitting among us as we explore these questions together, he would quite likely be smiling to himself and muttering something about "finding God in all things." He would find it completely normal and healthy that we should be searching to deepen our relationship with God in the midst of life as we really live it — up to our ears in work or lack of it, mortgages, children, and mess. He would be delighted to find that most of us are lay people, as he was when he made his own journey of discovery. He would surely welcome the fact that we come from many different church traditions, or even from none at all. And he would be more than tolerant of the checkered histories we may have behind us, remembering the excesses of his own misspent youth. Most of all, he would recognize the love of God that is burning inside each of us, that is always leading us onward, like a beacon, toward deepening our relationship with Him, because this would reflect the experience of Ignatius' own heart and the source of his prodigious energy.

So who was this man whose life and discoveries are still affecting our own journeys so fruitfully? Before we begin our journey proper, let's indulge for a few minutes in a time shift that takes us back to the age when Europe was in a similar kind of between-age turmoil, like a beacon, toward deepening our relationship with Him, because this would reflect the experience of Ignatius' own heart and the source of his prodigious energy.

Inigo Lopez lived at the time when the world was coming painfully and violently out of the Middle Ages. The mere facts of his life can be summed up in a few sentences; its content infinitely more far-reaching. He was born in 1491, the youngest of a family of 13, in Loyola, in the Basque region of northern Spain. When he was 14, he was sent away to train as a royal page to the king of Spain and was introduced to the ideals of chivalry and knightly service. As he grew older, he developed more than a passing interest in women, both those far away in his daydreams, and those who were temptingly accessible. The last thing on his mind during these years was his spiritual journey or the inner movements of his heart.

His life swerved around a big bend during his mid-twenties. The favor that his employer, Don Juan Velasquez, had enjoyed in the royal court came to an abrupt end at the death of the king. As a result, Inigo himself was unemployed, and chastened by his experience of how quickly and easily the power and riches and influence can disappear. With a parting gift of a few hundred crowns and two horses from the widow of his former employer, he had to set off into the unknown and start again.

The next phase of his life was in the household of the duke of Najera, who employed him as a gentleman-at-arms. Inigo learned to use weapons and helped to put down rebellions. His military training under the duke brought him, four years later, to a place called Pamplona, where he commanded a company defending the fortress there against a French invasion. The defense had become futile and defeat was a certainty, but Inigo was stubborn to the limits and absolutely refused to surrender. The price of his resistance came in the form of a cannonball which shattered his leg and broke his right knee. His days as a soldier ended on a stretcher; he was transported in agony and humiliation across the mountains to his family home in Loyola.

It must have seemed like the end of the line. Probably most of us can identify with that drained, empty feeling of being at the end of our dreams and our resources, or helpless in pain or immobility, either in body or in mind. We can imagine how it might have been for this young man, in the prime of his life, to lie a helpless
invalid, wracked by pain, with nothing but his broken dreams for company. So daydreaming is just what he did.

Having asked in vain for some lively romantic novels to read, Inigo had to make do with what the castle could offer, which turned out to be a Life of Christ and a Lives of the Saints. This stricken and disgruntled patient spent his time between reading and daydreaming of all that might have been, had his injury not robbed him, in a stroke, of both his future as a soldier and his attractiveness to women.

Daydreaming! Ironic that this man whose military skills and leadership potential were so remarkable should have come down to us, most powerfully, as a daydreamer. But Inigo’s daydreams held a potent secret. They had, locked up inside them, the key to the gift of discernment. And how did Inigo discover for himself this key that was to open up a gold mine in his heart?

As the tedious, pain-ridden days passed, Inigo indulged in two kinds of daydreaming. On the one hand, he still dreamed of the battles he would command, the military glories he would achieve, the noble ladies he would woo and win. But they were the dreams of “what might have been,” and though they raised his spirits for awhile, he enjoyed the fantasy, they left him, in the longer term, feeling flat and disconsolate.

On the other hand, fired by the books he had been given, he started to dream of a King whose service was potentially even more desirable than that of the king of Spain; he began to wonder how this Christ King might be served; he began to dream of outsaining the saints in this great new quest that might be worth spending his life on. They were still daydreams, but he noticed an important difference in their aftereffects. These dreams left him feeling inspired, energized and eager. They were not about what might have been, but about something that still lay dormant in the depths of his own heart, like a seed that had been mysteriously germinated and was pushing its way to the surface of his life through all this heavy soil of pain and disappointment. These were dreams that didn’t go away.

It was into this realization of the difference between daydreams and God-dreams (as we might call them) that the gift of discernment was given to Inigo. It was there that he discovered what we might call the “inner compass” of his heart, which was able to reveal to him which movements within him were capable of engaging his deepest, vital energy, and which were leading him only to fleeting satisfactions that left him unchanged and unfulfilled. As he lay there in his enforced stillness and solitude, he learned to notice his moods and feelings and reactions, and to measure them against this unseen compass. In his inner silence, he listened with fresh awareness to an invitation coming from deep inside himself to enlist in the adventure of the service of God. As he ventured more and more deeply into the stories that were inspiring his new kind of daydreaming, he was also finding a new way of exercising his imagination. He began to find himself, in imagination, present in the scenes, conversations and stories of the Gospels, and he began to participate in the plots of these stories. It was the start, for him, of an adventure into imaginative prayer that was to become a most powerful catalyst for the growth of his personal relationship with God, a method of prayer that is just as vividly available to us today.

On his sickbed, Inigo experienced deep conversion. Gradually, after many setbacks, he limped his way back to life, but it was never again to be the life he had known before; the cannonball had blown that life to pieces. Now Indigo was a pilgrim to God, to whom he was ready to offer all his ideals of knightly service, courage and persistence. The next step was to tell his family... as for so many who have walked this path in their own personal ways since then (including, surely, many of you who are reading this book today), this wasn’t easy! Against a backdrop of pressure to use his skills and gifts to bring honor to the family name and help maintain the family property, Inigo made his excuses and left, with neither he nor his family knowing with any certainty where he was headed. Inigo — the nobleman, the soldier, the fearless defender of Pamplona — had become Inigo the pilgrim.

The first stage of his pilgrimage — that search for the “I know not what” that was urging him onwards — took Inigo to the Abbey of Montserrat, high on a jagged mountain peak overlooking the plain of Manresa. Here he desired to make a full confession of his earlier life and begin again. His confession is said to have taken three days to make, and he received absolution from one of the monks there. He exchanged his nobleman’s dress for the simple outfit of a poor pilgrim and made a night vigil of prayer. He gave his clothes to a beggar and his mule to the monks. He left his sword and dagger behind as an offering at the altar and as a sign that he had exchanged his life in the service of the world’s values for one committed to the service of God.

As the new pilgrim made his way down the hill of Montserrat to the plain below, his mind must have been full of the experience of his conversation, his confession, his vigil, and the advice he had been
given by the monks on the life of prayer. To all this new experience, he surely applied the ways of discernment that he had discovered in his dreams at Loyola. He felt the need to stay awhile, in quiet, to reflect on all that had passed and everything that God seemed to be showing him through it. He also made some notes on his reflections. And so it happened that, instead of going straight to Barcelona as he had intended, he settled in the nearby town of Manresa for “a few days,” which stretched into 11 months. In Manresa, the next stage of his life took shape.

Determined to stay true to all he had promised God in Montserrat, the proud and self-willed Inigo now faced a life of begging for his daily food, while submitting to the relentless mockery of street urchins who were probably better dressed and cared for than he was. Living out the high dream of the mountain when he was down on the plain in the heat and dust of everyday reality proved to be, for him as for us, a constant struggle. He treated himself harshly, but he never forgot the agony of his own long sickness at Loyola, and he turned that memory into service by trying to help the sick in the hospitals of Manresa. He prayed until prayer became part of his every waking moment. At last he found a cave near the river where he made himself a desert home. That cave was to become a space where his love and understanding of
God would deepen beyond anything he could have imagined, where he would receive insights that remain fresh and valid for us today, and where, very important for us, he was to capture the fruits of his conversion, his prayer and his reflections in written form.

Perhaps inevitably, given what a good thing was gestating in his heart, Inigo also fell victim to the onslaught of negative movements, or “false spirits,” as he would have called them. He suffered endless self-recrimination about his sins, real and imagined. He experienced dark depths of despair and came close to taking his own life. It was, perhaps, a black time, shot through with golden streaks of insight and passionate commitment to God, or it was a golden time of spiritual growth and maturing, shot through with the darkest shafts of doubt and despair. Either way of looking at it may find its parallels in our own experience — we have those times in our lives that are at once fraught with struggle and alight with the flame of our hearts’ desires.

From Manresa came a man who had freely bound himself in joyful service to a king called Christ. He had been so opened to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that he was able to interpret his own experience in a way that has universal validity and significance. The fruit of this experience and the wisdom that it engendered is recorded in an unassuming little book called the Spiritual Exercises. Inigo’s notebook was to become increasingly sensitive to God’s action in our lives, how to discover and live true to the very deepest desires within us, how to make decisions that reflect God’s indwelling presence in the innermost freedom of our hearts and how to join our lives consciously with the life of Jesus, God-made-man, through the living spirit of the Gospel.

It would be nice to record that Inigo went from strength to strength in his life of discipleship. Of course, it wasn’t so. How could it be? We all know, too well, that things are never like that. Inigo’s dream of serving God in the Holy Land was intractably vetoed by the authorities there. His travels were overtaken by ill health and near shipwreck. His attempts to help others by sharing his Exercises in spiritual conversations brought opposition from the Church, which eventually subjected him to the Inquisition, and the secular authorities, who among other things threatened him with a public birching. Injustice, humiliation and betrayal became his familiar companions, but they were carrying a hidden gift: through them he came to realize that his desire to be with Christ was stronger than his desire to avoid the indignities and disgraces that the world and the Church meted out to him.

Despite all this, the word companion became central to Inigo’s life. In Manresa, Indigo had already begun to share his experiences with a few friends who showed interest in his Exercises. He used his own notes as a guide in helping them. This continues to be the way in which the Exercises are used: as a guide to a director, mentor or soul-friend in helping another person discover, through prayer and reflection, God’s action in his or her life.

Inigo’s ministry of companionship grew stronger when he became a student in Paris, belatedly trying to acquire the academic qualifications that would overcome the objections the Church raised against his speaking to others of spiritual matters without ecclesiastical authority. He was eventually ordained in 1536 at the age of 45 and adopted the name Ignatius. Before this, though, he and his friends in Paris, Francis Xavier and Peter Favre, were to deepen their friendship into a bond that forged them into the first Jesuits, as together they formed the Society of Jesus. By 1534, this little group of companions had grown to seven, and on August 15 of that year, they bound themselves into an embryonic religious order. On that day they shared the Eucharist together, made their vows and then celebrated … with a picnic!

Over 450 years separate us from that inconspicuous event on the outskirts of Paris.
The Spiritual Exercises

- Discovering who I really am
- Directing myself toward God
- Noticing God’s action in my life
- Responding to the movements in my heart
- Discovering the nature of my deepest desire
- Seeking God’s will
- Becoming free of all that distracts me from my deepest desire
- Making choices in line with my truest self
- Connecting my lived experience with the life, death and resurrection of Christ
- Responding to God’s love for me
- Finding God in all things

For the first seven Jesuits, there was surely no sense of disconnection between the deep seriousness of their commitment to God and to each other and the simple, exuberant joy of their celebratory picnic. Among the many riches that have come down to us from this small group of friends, we might focus on that coming together of all that makes us human: our searching and desiring, our failing and falling and fun loving, our shipwrecks and our picnics.

Maps and guidebooks would do just as well, you might say. And when it comes to the spiritual journey of our hearts, there is no shortage of maps and guidebooks, ranging from the “Go this way, or else!” variety of creed and catechism, to the “50 ways to climb the ladder of perfection” sort. The thing they all have in common is that they can be read in an armchair. They can all teach how to swim without getting wet.

Landmarks won’t let you do that. They are of no use at all unless you are all on the road! They are effective only in that they connect where you are, in your lived experience, to a point of recognition and orientation, to your own story and for the whole human story.

I remember once smiling over a particularly colorful description of a walk by the late A. Wainwright in one of his mountain walk guides, which included the bizarre instruction to “turn left at the third hawthorn tree.” This unlikely piece of wisdom made a gentle mockery of all the intricately drawn maps in the book. The third hawthorn tree just had to be discovered. It was a clue on a treasure hunt, and it demanded not only that I do it now, before the number and arrangement of the hawthorn trees should change beyond recognition. It was information distilled from his own walking of the path, and gladly, exuberantly, shared with me, his reader and fellow walker. The excitement of his own discovery infected me with the desire to make my own. It felt both personal and universal, rich with the paradox of a season ticket valid only for the present moment.

Landmarks, like hawthorn trees, are also useful only when there is some light to see by. Even people who are on the way and committed to following the right path will encounter times of obscurity and darkness when the evidence is hidden or the signals are mixed. Inner Compass also explores ways of developing the skills and resources needed for those times when we walk by faith and not sight.

Perhaps the landmarks in this book share something of the quality of Wainwright’s third hawthorn tree. You may recognize them, though you might not call them by the names I know them by. I hope they may help you find your own way to
Tips for Keeping a Prayer Notebook
Prayer Review

For St. Ignatius Loyola keeping a record of one's spiritual journey was essential. He kept his own record of thoughts, experiences, and ideas. It was hardly for public consumption. Single words, stream of consciousness and even drawings covered the pages. His notes existed for him; to give him a sense of his own journey. We encourage you to review and take note of what is occurring during your prayer.

Some options:

- Be open and honest. No one will ever see the contents of your notebook.
- Forget about rules of spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. These notes are for you so let your thoughts flow as freely as possible.
- Experiment with different methods
  - Jot down how you felt during prayer
  - Use your writing as a prayer — a letter to God
  - Express strong emotions on paper
  - Use the notebook to jot down all your "worldly" concerns before you pray so you can focus better.
  - Note how well your prayer time went and why.
  - Refer to the concerns, issues and events of your life so there is context when you review your notes later
  - Write your thoughts in stream of consciousness, letting flow to paper whatever comes to mind in any order
  - Set a time limit for yourself and write whatever comes to mind for that time. (e.g. I will write something, anything for the next five minutes.)
  - Note what stirrings you had since your last prayer time
    - Did any part of your prayer come to mind later in the day?
    - Did someone else mention something that reminded you of your prayer time?
    - Do you recollect your prayer time as a time of peace, frustration, etc?
    - Did you do anything differently because of your prayer time?
- Review your past entries occasionally, maybe once per month. Look for changes in attitude, values, feelings, decisions, etc.

Writing these prayer notes, or, if you wish, keeping a prayer journal, is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The process of writing and reviewing forces us to be reflective. If you have committed to five minutes a day for jotting notes about your prayer life you will soon find yourself thinking about what you might write today. Those reflections keep you in tune with how the Spirit is moving in your life. You are asking yourself, "where was God in my life today?" The more you listen, the more you will hear.
PREPARE: Choose Place, Posture, Prayer Time, Prayer Passage, and become mindful of the Presence of God.

GRACE SOUGHT: God help me to be open to You in this retreat, and in my life.

Pray:
Psalm 46:10 "Be silent and know that I am God"
Jer 29, 11-14 "I know the plans I have for you"
Psalm 139:1-18 "Yahweh, You know me"

Reflection: What Has My Life Been All About?

Select no more than three of the following to reflect upon this week. Take one per day and use these prompts as a starting point for your reflections. Use them to start writing notes in your prayer notebook.

1. You are at the hair stylist’s (or if you prefer, at the neighborhood tavern) chatting with a friend and he/she asks, “What are the three oddest coincidences that occurred in your life?” Your answer??

2. To whom do you pray, and why? Father, Son, Spirit? Have you ever even thought about this?

3. Where have you met God in your life? Was there a time, or times, when His presence was palpable and real for you?

4. Think of representing your life on a graph or chart. The horizontal line is the years that have passed and the vertical is the good times (highs) and the bad times (lows). You can draw the graph if you wish. Either way, think about how you felt at each peak and valley.

5. Have you ever been angry at God? If so, think of when and why.

6. Reflect on some of your companions on your life journey so far. Who were the mentors, friends, heroes that affected your path? How?

7. It’s your funeral. The eulogy will be very simple; a list of what your friends and family agree were the three most important things in your life, in order of importance. What is that list?