Manresa House of Retreats prepares its special edition

By CHRISS ROSSO

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CONVENT - Just past a sharp turn in the River Road, in the shadow of the cypress grove, sits the two-story President's House of St. Ignatius.

The current President's House is a part of the original building constructed in 1836 for the Jesuit order. The first Jesuit in Louisiana, Father Francis Baudin, established the Jesuit College in 1812 on the same site.

After the American Civil War, the college was not reestablished until 1871 when it was reestablished as Jefferson College. In 1874, St. Ignatius House of Prayer, formerly the President's House, was purchased by the Jesuits.

The Jesuits have held the property since the 17th century, when Jefferson College in 1836, has been in existence for over 150 years. The property has been named St. Ignatius House of Prayer.

Currently, the Jesuits are engaged in a restoration project of the President's House, which will be dedicated during the centennial of LSU this year.

The President's House is a typical retreat room with a fireplace and a high ceiling. The rooms are furnished with antiques and are located on the second floor of the building.

The Manresa property includes some acreage across the River Road, directly in front of the President's House. The property is being used for retreats and is available for private use.

The Manresa house is a retreat building with a name. The board of directors preferred to leave the other buildings unnamed. The building will be used for longer retreats.

A retreat is not just to get away. One could do that at a fishing camp or hunting lodge. A retreat is to get away from the world and have time to be by oneself. It is a time to reflect on one's life, to pray, to read, to write, to paint, to garden, to meditate.

The President's House is a perfect example of a retreat building. The rooms are furnished with antique furniture and are located on the second floor of the building.

The retreatants choose to do artistic renderings on the ledger pages. Some are plainly printed while other pages are hand-written. Some rooms are utilized for artistic purposes.

There is a great deal more, said Majoli. "There are six large rooms, one is a chapel, one is the chamber of the caretaker-priest and the other four will be used for guests making longer retreats (longer than the customary four days)." The restoration of the buildings - a main building, a library building, a Gothic chapel and a dining building - is nearing completion.

The spiritual exercises are emphasized at Manresa. There is only one role at the retreat house, called the Golden Rule. It's the role of silence and the role of silence falls on the retreatant.

The retreats are for the silence in which a man is asked to examine himself on the central theme of love of one's neighbor as oneself. We are Christians. There is no attempt to proselytize or argue. We are simply trying to promote love and unity.

There are only two ways these things are not threatened. Retreats have charged quite a bit. They paid all the expenses and had one man to serve 11 people. We ask people to need this. We ask for the support and the support is there. The retreat is not just to get away. One could do that at a fishing camp or hunting lodge. It is to get away from the world and have time to be by oneself. It is a time to reflect on one's life, to pray, to read, to write, to paint, to garden, to meditate.

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Names of participants are recorded in the final step in the restoration project. The restoration of the Macedonia - the library building - is nearing completion.

Names of participants are recorded in the book bound volumes located in the library. Names are recorded on the centennial of LSU this year. The book will be available for purchase.

The garden is a special edition of retreats. St. Ignatius House of Prayer, formerly the President's House, was purchased by the Jesuits.

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