



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



*Our* **LADY**  
*of* **GOOD**  
**COUNSEL**  
RETREAT HOUSE

# A YEAR OF GRATITUDE & REFLECTIONS ON OUR 60 YEARS

By: Fr. Gary Coulter, Director



As we reflect on our 60th Anniversary year, I am deeply grateful for all the Lord has done. This milestone has been a time of celebration and reflection, with a renewed commitment to our mission of providing a sacred space for spiritual renewal.

Our celebrations began with a Matt Maher concert and Eucharistic procession, followed by events like Masses with Bishop Conley, an Ablaze worship night, our inaugural Celebration Dinner, and a Christ at the Center Christmas celebration. These gatherings helped us give thanks for six decades of blessings.

At the heart of our ministry are the thousands of retreatants who come seeking silence, prayer, and a deeper relationship with God. Many have shared how their time here has been transformative. One retreatant said, "The renewal, rest, reflection, and time with our Lord is unmatched." Another shared, "The silent retreat gave me ways to improve my relationship with God, and I plan to share this with my family."

This year, over 2,500 retreatants visited us, an increase of 350 from last year. We expanded our offerings of Ignatian retreats, spiritual healing, and youth programs, with over 500 students experiencing the value of a retreat. We now join the Church in a "Year of Prayer" for the 2025 Jubilee Year, inviting you to join us in deepening your prayer life and placing God at the center.

Your generosity has helped us maintain and improve our facilities, making retreats more accessible. Special thanks for your support during the Nebraska Catholic Day of Giving. As we continue our mission, we rely on God's providence and your prayers, participation, and financial support. Your involvement is vital to helping others experience the transformative power of retreat.

In closing, one retreatant's words resonate deeply: "We all need to get away from the noise and reconnect with Jesus. The Good Counsel Retreat House is that place." Thank you for being part of our 60-year journey. I pray that Our Lady of Good Counsel will continue to guide us as we look forward to many more years of spiritual renewal.

# 60th ANNIVERSARY SNAPSHOTS



Thank you for blessing us with your support and involvement during our 60th Anniversary Year. We were thrilled to celebrate this special milestone in so many meaningful ways, including key events such as the Matt Maher concert, CHRISTmas at the Center, The Magnificat Dinner, an open house to honor our Dedication Day, and the Corpus Christi Procession and Mass.



# FROM GARDEN ROOTS...

The "Back to the Garden" retreat was a weekend retreat filled with peace, hope, and love for so many. It attracted women from various backgrounds, all seeking a deeper connection to their faith. Many of the attendees agreed that this weekend was a life-changing experience, and one that drew them closer to the Holy Spirit.

Sarina Stokes, a key speaker and creator of the retreat, explained the deeper spiritual meaning behind the theme: **"Your heart is the garden, it's the indwelling of God.** This is what you've been made for, but there's a place of woundedness in the feminine heart that really ruptures our relationship with Jesus."

Sarina's words highlighted the universal theme of healing and spiritual renewal, especially for women who have experienced hurt, loss, or alienation in their personal faith journeys.



Sarina Stokes, Retreat Facilitator



Sarina also noted, **"This retreat is about allowing women to encounter Jesus' mercy in that place of hurt, like Mary Magdalene did in the garden after the Resurrection.** Jesus wants to come into and redeem even the darkest nights in one's story through His own story. His wounds become a place of intimacy."

The retreat sold out quickly and is a testament to people's desire for a spiritual and sacred experience. An attendee shared, **"This retreat was one of the most powerful and beautiful retreats I have ever been on. I have never felt God so closely. I loved the little details they included to make the experience very real and to help you feel the beauty of your feminine heart. Every woman should attend and receive that kind of love from the Heavenly Father."**



This retreat is an example of another new form of outreach and invitation that the Retreat House is facilitating on behalf of our Lord. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support in helping us enrich spiritual lives.

# ...TO FUTURE BLOOMS

Youth retreats, particularly those held at **Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House**, play an essential role in nurturing the next generation of disciples. These retreats provide young people with the opportunity to listen for and hear the calling of the Lord, to feel the Holy Spirit move deep within their hearts, and to embrace their spiritual journey with purpose. By empowering youth to encounter Christ in a deep and personal way, retreats help create a generation that will lead in conviction with their faith first.

In an age where many young people are busier than ever and are pulled in different directions by secular culture, retreats provide a vital opportunity for spiritual formation, renewal, and growth. Retreats are a place where **youth can be reminded of the importance of prayer, service, and community—three pillars that sustain the Church**. The Retreat House plays a crucial role in assisting the next generation in better understanding what the Lord is calling them to in their own vocation, providing the formation they need to remain engaged with their faith throughout their lives.



Speaking with students on importance of Reconciliation

Janna Walkowiak, Assistant Principal at St. Peter Catholic School, said this about the youth retreats:

**“We are so grateful to partner with Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House to provide our junior high students with the opportunity to grow in their ability to discern God’s will and presence in their lives through the retreat process. We’re looking forward to coming back again!”**



562 students served last academic year, from both Lincoln and beyond.

# WITH HEARTFELT THANKS

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

-1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Thanks to our generous benefactors, the Retreat House has significantly upgraded guest accommodations. A special anonymous donor purchased new extra-long twin mattresses for each room. Jerry Coniglio of Lincoln Mattress and Furniture provided a great discount on this purchase, plus donated pillows. Additional support from our first **Nebraska Catholic Day of Giving** provided new sheets and pillowcases. We are truly grateful for this support.

A generous \$60,000 gift from the **Dillon Foundation** provided a new walk-in cooler, a vital upgrade for our kitchen. This new cooler has brought peace of mind to our kitchen staff, allowing them to focus on serving guests without worrying about the old, failing unit. Thank you to the Dillon Foundation for their generosity.

We are also thankful for a matching gift that enabled us to purchase new chairs for our library and replace worn recliners in retreatant rooms, enhancing comfort for our guests. Special thanks to **Ron and Shirley Huss, Gene Buhman, and an anonymous benefactor** for their support with this matching gift.

We are also grateful to **Sandhills Global** for their immense generosity in helping us find a solution to an ongoing lagoon issue. They graciously heard our call for help and stepped in to find and fund a solution for the entire Catholic Center.



Thank you to Gabe Kidwell, advisory board member and executive vice president of **Kidwell Inc.**, for graciously donating the materials and services to enhance the lighting of our parking lot and walkway. This is a key component in helping our retreatants feel safe and invited upon arrival.

Every Diocesan priest is required to go on an annual retreat, at a place of their choosing. This past summer we hosted 130 priests on three separate priest retreats. During these retreats, we express our gratitude for their life of service by providing a steak dinner, served by Serra Club of Lincoln. We are grateful to **The Mercato** for donating certified Piedmontese steaks for this meal, which has become a time of celebration, fellowship, and tradition.

**“We hope to continue offering a place free from distraction, in which people can come to experience the Holy Spirit in all of His glory. Thank you for your support in helping us to enhance this sacred experience.”**

Fr. Gary Coulter, Retreat House Director



# YOUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Fiscal Year July 2023 - June 2024  
RETREATS BY THE NUMBERS

**1,147** IN-PERSON

**130** VIRTUAL

**628** ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

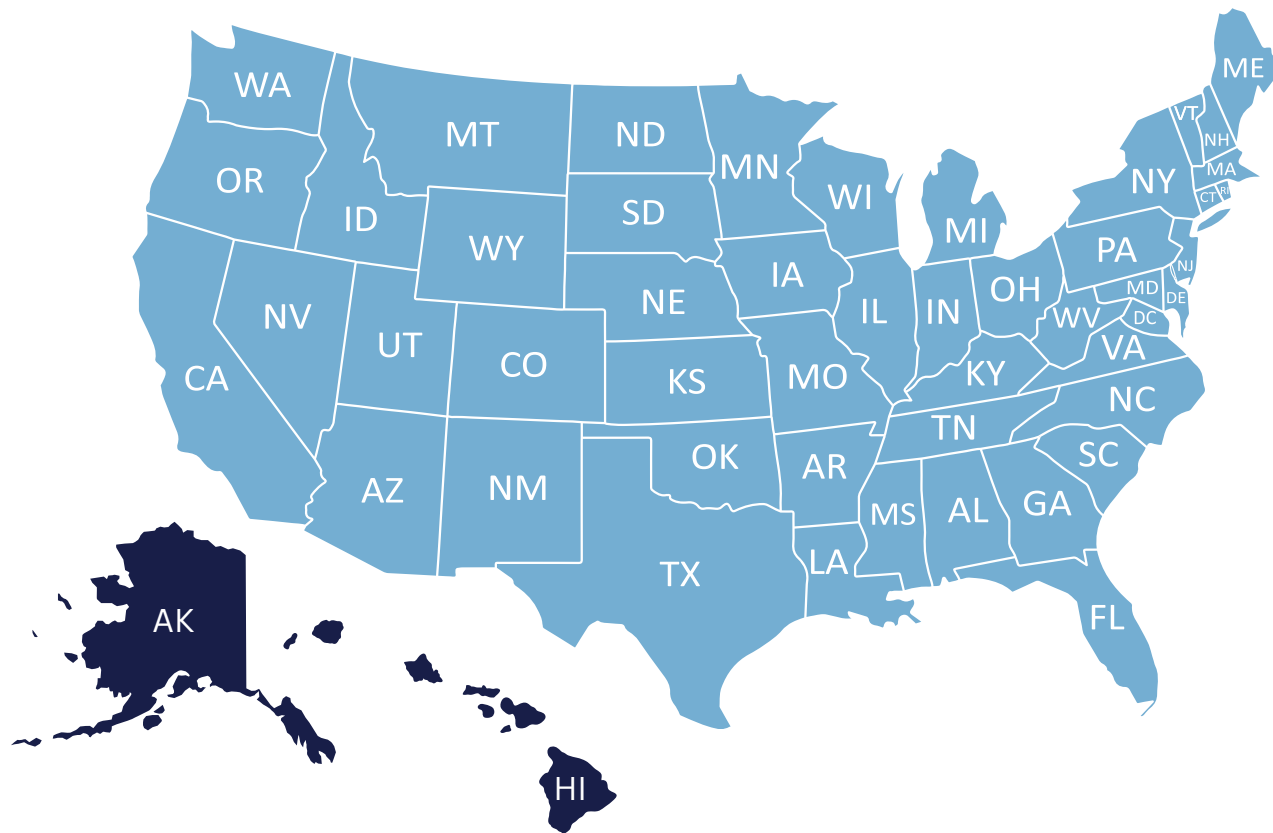
**258** PRIESTS/RELIGIOUS/SEMINARIANS

**562** YOUTH RETREAT STUDENTS

**1,410** CATERED MEALS

**3,744** ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS

**7,879** TOTAL LIVES TOUCHED



## RETREATANT LOCATION MAP KEY

● REACHED   ● HAVE YET TO REACH

**48** STATES

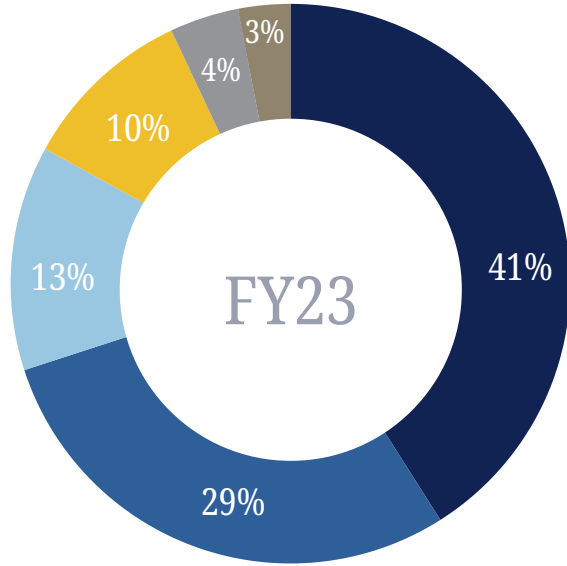
**14** INTERNATIONAL COUNTRIES

SPAIN   UK   MEXICO   PHILIPPINES  
MALTA   SOUTH SUDAN   IRELAND   INDIA  
GERMANY   CANADA   ITALY   AUSTRALIA  
SINGAPORE   TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

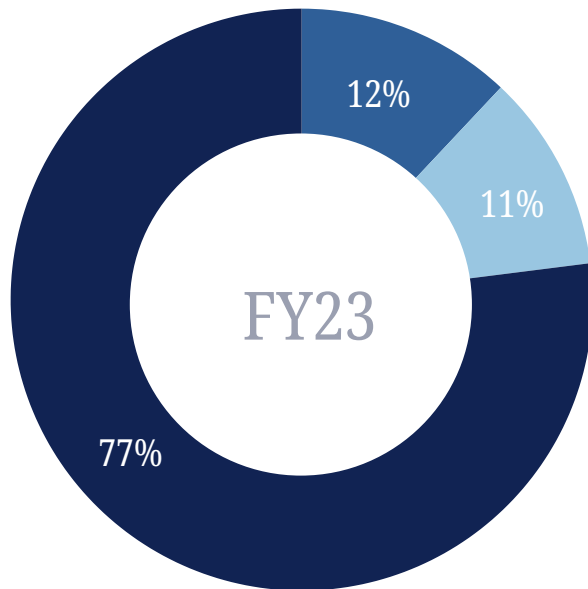


# FINANCIAL REPORT WITH HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

## Fiscal Year July 2023- June 2024 WHAT WE RECEIVED



● Donations	\$371,978	● Conferences and Programs	\$37,056
● Retreats	\$256,222	● Charity and Stewardship Appeal	\$25,000
● Priests and Religious	\$115,248	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$898,923</b>
● Engaged Encounter	\$93,419		



## Fiscal Year July 2023 - June 2024 HOW WE USED IT

● Programs and Facilities	\$610,479
● Development and Marketing/Outreach	\$98,467
● Administrative and Office	\$83,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$792,170</b>

# MAKING RETREATS POSSIBLE FOR ALL

## THE MAGNIFICAT SOCIETY

The Magnificat Society has been created to recognize donors who want to leave a legacy, support our work, and magnify the Lord. If you'd like to learn more about this legacy society, please contact us.

## FOUNDING MEMBERS

Anonymous  
Mark & Michelle Aylor  
Luke & Alice Benes  
Brian & Michele Chambers  
Catharine Chandler  
Mike & Rosemary Clements  
Bob & Mary Coulter  
P.R. DeMarco  
John & Pat Miller  
Bryan & Mary Welty  
Al & LeeAnn Zach

## MEMBERS

Anonymous  
Rick & Dawn Campos  
Greg & Kim Coffey  
Reverend Jeremy Hazuka

We have scholarships available for those in need. Please contact us if you need financial assistance to attend a retreat.

MANY THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING PARISHES FOR PAYING HALF THE COST OF A RETREAT FOR THEIR PARISHIONERS.

<b>All Saints</b> Holdrege, NE	<b>St. Joseph</b> Nebraska City, NE	<b>Sacred Heart</b> Hebron, NE
<b>Assumption Parish</b> David City, NE	<b>St. Mary</b> Davey, NE	<b>St. Teresa</b> Lincoln, NE
<b>St. Andrew</b> Tecumseh, NE	<b>St. Mary</b> David City, NE	
<b>St. Francis of Assisi</b> Lincoln, NE	<b>St. Mary</b> Denton, NE	
<b>St. John the Apostle</b> Lincoln, NE	<b>North American Martyrs</b> Lincoln, NE	
<b>St. Joseph</b> Beatrice, NE	<b>St. Peter</b> Lincoln, NE	

## JOIN US ON RETREAT

Have you, a loved one, or a friend been desiring to “come away to a quiet place and rest awhile”?

Encounter God in the simplicity and silence at Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House.

View our retreat schedule at [goodcounselretreat.org/our-retreats/](http://goodcounselretreat.org/our-retreats/)



# OUR STAFF



**Fr. Gary Coulter**  
Retreat House  
Director



**Louann Cao**  
Hotel  
Manager



**Bevan Flynn**  
Maintenance  
Manager



**Linh Hoang**  
Housekeeping  
and Kitchen



**Jessica Schueth**  
Office  
Coordinator



**Tra My Tran**  
Kitchen  
Manager



**Jackie Urkoski**  
Director of  
Development



**Amanda Weeder**  
Outreach &  
Marketing Coordinator

# OUR MISSION

As a Catholic ministry in the Diocese of Lincoln, our mission is to provide a sanctuary and experience which leads people to encounter Jesus Christ. Through inspiring retreats and warm hospitality, we seek to transform and renew the spiritual lives of all desiring the opportunity to listen to the Holy Spirit and know the Father's love, peace and healing.

# ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS



**Rosemary Clements**



**Jeff Garrett**



**Ron Huss**



**Steve Jaros**



**Gabe Kidwell**



**Jude Werner**



**Mary Wilson**



**Al Zach**



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Scan the QR code to register and access information on all our upcoming retreats!