

'RETREAT IN THE REAL WORLD: FINDING INTIMACY WITH GOD WHEREVER YOU ARE'

CU online retreat now published in book

Catholic Voice

What started in 15th century manuscripts as St. Ignatius's "Spiritual Exercises" and exploded around the world on the Internet at the end of the 20th century as a 34-week online retreat, is returning to ink-on-paper printed word.

"Retreat in the Real World: Finding Intimacy with God Wherever You Are" puts that 34-week retreat into a 328-page paperback.

While the online retreat has been more popular than its creators could have imagined, they realize the computer version isn't necessarily for everyone.

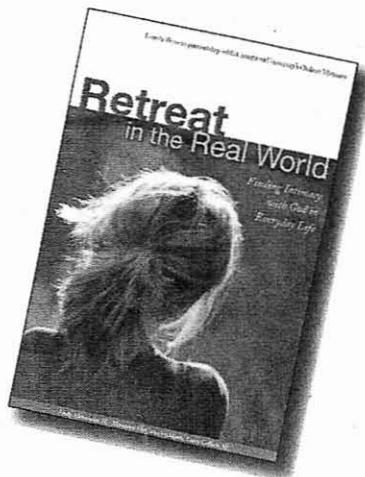
"People don't always want to pray right at their computer," said Father Andy Alexander, SJ, who worked with Creighton Ministry's Maureen McCann Waldron on the project. "They are looking for something easier to carry when they pray in another room or even another city. And not everyone is comfortable with or has the Internet available to them every day."

Father Alexander and Waldron's book presents the 34-week retreat based on the teachings of the Jesuits' founder in a user-friendly format, with text guiding the reader through each week, offering background information, a simple reflection, prayer-helps, Scripture readings and photography.

Each week builds on the previous week's work, they said.

The Creighton project drew the expertise of other colleagues, including Father Larry Gillick, SJ, director of the DeGelman Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Creighton, and Father Don Doll, SJ, internationally-known photographer and professor of journalism and mass communication.

Father Gillick provided reflections for each of the 34 weeks, and Father Doll captured each week's theme in photos. Past on-



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line retreat participants also share their reflections and comments.

The retreat is not so much about time as focus, Father Alexander said. "It's a hallmark of Ignatian tradition, and the themes of the retreat interact with the real world activities of a busy life," he said. "The results are growing spiritual freedom and a deep and wonderful new relationship with Jesus and his mission."

When they created the online retreat about 10 years ago, they were responding to Creighton University employees who wanted to learn more about the "Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius.

Daily Reflections, a feature of Creighton's Online Ministries Web site, was attracting people from around the world, and Father Alexander and Waldron saw an online Ignatian retreat as a way to reach out not only to Creighton employees but to the world.

Now offered in six languages other than English, the online retreat is used by people in more than 130 countries.



COURTESY PHOTO

Creighton staff, from left, Father Andy Alexander, SJ, Maureen McCann Waldron, Father Larry Gillick, SJ, and Father Don Doll, SJ, collaborated on "Retreat in the Real World: Finding Intimacy with God Wherever You Are," a book version of the 34-week online retreat of St. Ignatius's Spiritual Exercises.