



Providing The Way



Father Greg Peatee of Toledo, Ohio Recovering his ministry, his self worth, his spirituality

"I'm Going To Be Just Like You, Dad."

I was born in Toledo, Ohio in November 1961. My family would grow to encompass seven boys and two girls; I was the fourth oldest child. My parents struggled with their large family and my dad battled alcoholism. Looking back, I was the child who was the peace-maker in the family. I never liked any kind of fights or disagreements. I was the negotiator between my siblings.

Early in life I recall the Church to be my place of refuge. Even though we lived about one mile from the Church it seemed my brother and I were always assigned to serve the 6 am Mass. Why? Because we were the only ones who showed up to serve. In 6th grade we were given the privilege to sing in the boy's choir. Oh yeah, every boy in six grade was assigned to choir. I did very well in the choir and enjoyed the praise I would receive. The more praise, the more I would volunteer. The more I volunteered the more I got away from the craziness of my home life.

The ordeal of choosing a high school began around Christmas of my 8th grade year. I wanted to go to Central Catholic High School where my parents went. My parents wanted me to go to the all boys' high school, St. Johns

Jesuit from which my grandpa, two uncles and a brother had graduated. Being the obedient son I went to St. Johns. But this started my first big resentment. My parents told me I would have to get a job to pay to attend a school I didn't want to go to in the first place.

Again I turned to my home parish. I got a job as a janitor to sweep the halls and empty the garbage after school. On weekends I mopped the halls and cleaned the bathrooms. This spilled into cleaning the Church. My home parish happens to be the Cathedral. By the time I was a junior I was in charge of maintenance as well as cleaning. It was in these years I began to think about priesthood.

I have a vivid memory of a lunchtime conversation in the late spring. Everyone at the table was talking about beginning to think about colleges they wanted to attend. I remember thinking "We are juniors—why are you worried about something that isn't going to happen until next year?". It was at this time I disclosed to a classmate my thoughts about priesthood. They immediately wanted to know why I wanted to ruin my life. They could see no value in not having sex, getting married or living a life free of the Church.



Father Greg Peatee

Already afraid of my own shadow and wanting to "fit-in" I never brought up the idea again. I felt like an outcast even then. I enjoyed church, they didn't. I had a job and was responsible, they weren't. I did what I was told and followed the rules, they didn't. I was developing my first taste of uniqueness.

In High School I never went to the parties or dances because of the drinking I heard that went on before or after. With my father's drinking career reaching its peak, I saw alcohol as an enemy. I made myself the promise that I wasn't going to drink until I was twenty-one, if then. A promise I kept until I was twenty-one.

As I left high school my thoughts of priesthood continued to get stronger and stronger. Every priest I personally knew at that time taught school, so I decided to go to college to get a teaching degree and be in a co-ed



Father Greg Peatee

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environment. I continued to work maintenance at the Cathedral while I went to the University of Toledo. I graduated and got a teaching position as a 5th grade teacher at a local parish. My heart was in the primary grades and the next year I was moved to 1st grade.

From there my thoughts of priesthood surfaced and I decided to answer the question once and for all. I went to a “come and see” weekend at St. Meinrad that turned into a come and stay. I felt part of a hole was being filled in, yet I still felt empty a lot of the time. In seminary I discovered I could drink more than others. When I drank I got the liquid courage that I never had before. I could be “myself” when I drank. Even though I drank far more than others I never seemed to have a hangover. Life was good.

I was ordained in 1992 and was assigned as the associate pastor of the third largest parish in the city. I would say that my drinking at this time was very social. From there I moved to the associate at the second largest parish in the city. I also had many roles outside the parish; secretary to the Priest Council, representative to NFPC, the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the Catholic Club Board and St. John’s Jesuit Identity Committee.

I was like a duck; above the water I appeared cool, calm and serene, but under the water I was paddling like hell to stay afloat. I felt inadequate and not qualified to do anything I was doing. My great fear inside of myself was that I

would fail; that I would be found out, that I was a nothing, that I was dumb and stupid. That is when I discovered that a drink would calm my fears. I would then have the courage to face anything.

After five years I was moved as the associate pastor to the largest parish in the Diocese. It was here that I realized my drinking was not like normal folks. I was living on my own for the first time in my life at age 39. I began to come home and have a drink to reward my self for a good day or drown my feelings if I was having a bad day. It was here that alcohol became my crutch.

After three years I moved on to become a first time pastor. I was given an inner-city parish that was in debt to the Diocese for a half million dollars. I was told if I couldn’t turn the parish around it would be closed. A year later after some major consolidation, the Diocese added another parish to my assignment. In reality I had six parishes rolled into two. On top of this I became Dean along with my many other roles. “Ethel” became my constant companion. It was at this time I tried to control my drinking. I would try to only drink one a day. Then, I tried drinking only after 5 pm. Nothing worked. I remember going to bed and praying that God would take me in my sleep.

My first crisis with alcohol came as I was hosting a deanery picnic in June and I collapsed due to my drinking and my newly found disease of diabetes. A trip to the hospital told me I had

a blood alcohol level 2.5 times greater than the legal limit. I went to a friend’s house that night, and the next day there was a sort of intervention. I readily agreed to go to a treatment center in Toledo. I felt some relief that my secret was finally known. It would be a year before I got the program. I went to a facility for 5 days and was discharged.

Six weeks later I was back at the facility for another 5 days and then extensive out-patient treatment. I began working the program but after Christmas I was drinking again. It didn’t take long to be right back where I was before and worse. At this point I had to have a drink in the morning to take away my shakes.

I barely managed my life for five months. On May 26, 2008 I called my sister because I knew something was terribly wrong. She drove me to the emergency room whereupon I was admitted. I was having a medication reaction to my drinking. My sodium level dropped to 91 from a normal reading of 135. I am told that if you go below 90 you die. At this point my esophagus was raw from drinking and vomiting. They did an esophageal exam and from that time on my speech was changed. Five months later I would find out that I’d had two strokes.

My family doctor was not going to release me from the hospital unless I went into a treatment facility. I made the call to the Diocese on Friday, and

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Alumni Gather at Lake Orion

sions, and they spent leisure time together. Bob Martin, the long-time Alumni Facilitator for Guest House, coordinated and conducted the event with the help of the Guest House Outreach Department, Administration, and the Lake Orion Treatment Center.

The theme of this year's Conference and Reunion was "Recovery and the St. Francis Peace Prayer." On Wednesday, August 3, the priests and religious gathered for the traditional Memorial Mass for deceased alumni and benefactors of Guest House. On the concluding evening of the event—Thursday, August 4—the men enjoyed a farewell dinner out with a presentation by one of our alumni.

Guest House President and COO, Denise Bertin-Epp, who welcomed

the men to the event and at the concluding banquet, commented afterward:

"It is always such a joy to be with the alumni! The camaraderie they share with each other, the stories of life changing events they have experienced with the gift of sobriety, and finally the special spiritual bond that is established, affirms the Guest House rationale for fostering alumni events.

"It is so apparent that God influences and blesses each and every one of these men. I have nothing but gratitude for the experience to spend time with our alumni when they return to Guest House!"

Guest House's men's alumni gathered in Lake Orion this year for their 49th Annual Conference and Reunion, August 2-4 at the Scripps Mansion, our original treatment center site. On alternate years, the alumni meet at our Rochester, Minnesota facility.

The priests and male religious enjoyed camaraderie, they enriched themselves spiritually, they attended educational ses-

✓ Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us!

2011	
Wednesday, September 28	Chicago Cardinal's Dinner St. Ignatius Preparatory Chicago, IL
Wednesday, November 2	All Souls Mass & Luncheon Scripps Mansion Lake Orion, MI
Saturday, November 5	Icon Dei Fall Luncheon & Boutique Troy, Michigan
2012	
Wednesday, May 16	Rochester Bishop's Reception Rochester, MN
Monday, June 11	Guest House Golf Classic Indianwood Golf & Country Club Lake Orion, MI

For information about these events, please call Development at 1-800-626-6910 (out of state) or 1-248-391-4445 (locally).



Memorials

When sending in your memorial gift, please print all information. Please also include street addresses so that we can be sure to be accurate when notifying next of kin or friends of the deceased. For Special Memorial gifts of \$500 or more, you can have permanent recognition at our treatment center for your departed relative or friend, while providing a major gift to our work. Call our Development Department at 1-800-626-6910 for more information. Thank you and God bless you for your kindness! Memorials listed are from 5/24/11 to 8/15/11.

FOR DECEASED FAMILY MEMBERS Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Estrada	GERARD BARTHE Lucienne M. Barthe	EDWARD FREIBERG Mrs. Lorraine Roob	LARRY KELLY Barbara A. Kelly
FOR THE DECEASED MEMBERS OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY Mr. Dell W. Primasing	RAYMOND & VERONICA BECKMAN Mr. Norman Beckman	LUDWIG GALLANT Mrs. Joyce Haumesser	KATHLEEN KICKHAM Marcia Kickham
FOR THE DECEASED MEMBERS OF THE BRANDEFINE FAMILY Mr. Patrick Brandefine	MARY BRUCH Mr. Charles G. Bruch	THOMAS GANNON Mr. Timothy J. Gannon	S. CARL KIMMERLING Mary Helen Kimmerling
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MY DEAR MOTHER Mr. Mike Hermes	MICHAELA ANNE DZURISIN Mr. John D. Dzurisin	MSGR. ROBERT P. HICKEY Rosemarie Farrell	JAMES J. MCGUIRE Mrs. James J. McGuire
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Memorials

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Dear Donors,

We thought we would share these compelling words with you because they seem to capture the essence and importance of the priesthood—and remind us why it is so important to save as many priestly vocations as we can!

Priest of Jesus Christ

**To live in the midst of the world,
without wishing its pleasures,
To be a member of each family,
yet belonging to none,
To share all sufferings,
To penetrate all secrets,
To heal all wounds,
To go from men to God
and offer Him their prayers.
To return from God to men,
To bring pardon and hope!
To have a heart of fire for Charity,
and a heart of bronze for Chastity,
To teach and to pardon,
To console and to bless always.
My God! What a life!
And it is yours, O Priest of Jesus Christ.**

**Jean Baptiste Henri Lacordaire, OP
1802-1861**

*Guest House wishes to express
its most profound thanks to the following individuals
who so graciously remembered us with gifts in their wills,
received between June 2, 2011 and August 22, 2011.*

Rose M. Amatelli
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Marguerite G. Trauscht



*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual
light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace, Amen.*

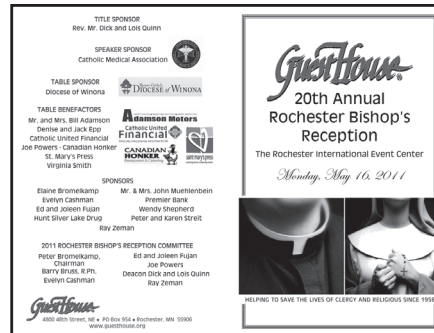


Fund & Friend Raising

Over the past several months, a number of important events have taken place on our behalf.

Rochester Bishop's Reception – 20 Years Strong

More than 80 Guest House benefactors, friends and volunteers joined us on May 16 at the Rochester International Event Center in Minnesota for our 20th annual fundraiser there. Attendees, including Winona Bishop John Quinn, were delighted to hear Guest House alumnus Father Jerry Keiser tell his story of a destructive alcohol addiction replaced with his blessed, continuing recovery.



Icon Dei Meet & Greet Over Salads!

May 17 found about 100 members and friends of the suburban Detroit-based Icon Dei Guild gathering for fine salads and desserts at its popular "Summer Salad Luncheon." The event took place at St. Hugo of the Hills parish in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. The fundraiser showcased dozens of delicious salads and desserts prepared by Icon Dei members—with very few leftovers!



First Friday at Scripps Mansion

Since the 1960's, the Icon Dei Guild has raised money exclusively for the benefit of our patient care programs. On Friday, August 5, about 40 of its members visited our Lake Orion, Michigan campus for their "1st Friday Mass & Lunch." The Liturgy was celebrated at the historic William E.

Scripps Mansion. It was followed by a tour of the Mansion then lunch at our "Recovery Residence" nearby, hosted by the four priests in residence there.

Guest House Golf Classic – Sun, Golf & Fellowship

A beautiful—although very windy—day greeted our golfers at the 26th Annual Guest House Golf Classic on June 13. The event took place on the renowned Indianwood Golf and Country Club course in Lake Orion, Michigan. Indianwood, a Scottish "heather" style course, is the site of the U.S. Senior Open in 2012. Our 27th Annual Classic in 2012 will also take place at Indianwood. Golf's greats will be following in the footsteps of our golfers!



In Appreciation

Guest House acknowledges with gratitude the following permanent endowments and trusts which have been set up by donor friends.

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For more information on gift-giving opportunities to assist Guest House in its apostolate, please contact Development, at 1-800-626-6910.



Father Greg Peatee

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on Monday morning I was on my way to Guest House. When my plane tickets arrived, I was confused because I thought Guest House was at Lake Orion, Michigan, about an hour drive from Toledo. I was so sick of being sick, I didn't question it and I was on my way to Rochester, Minnesota.

I don't remember much of my first several weeks at Guest House. I know I was afraid and very scared. I knew I needed help but I wasn't sure I was willing to go to any length to get help. My counselor kept asking me if I washed my hands excessively and told me that folks who have my issues usually do. The fog cleared enough that I knew I had to have a different counselor if I was going to be honest with myself and others in order to get better.

It was about a month into my stay at Guest House that I realized I was going to be there for some time and finally I was OK with that thought. I settled down and started working with my counselors and began to embrace AA. I got psychologically better. I was still having trouble speaking and I had some physical balance issues but I told myself it was progress not perfection.

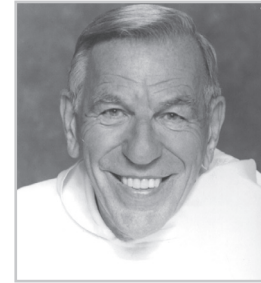
I returned to my assignment and was greeted with open arms. Folks were glad I was back and better. I withheld nothing from them. When I left for Guest House the party line was that I went to the Mayo Hospital to get my diabetes under control. Not a lie but not the whole truth. From the pulpit I told folks I was away for the treatment of my alcoholism. Everyone responded very warmly and welcomed me back home.

I could have never imagined a life as great as I have now. I no longer feel inadequate. My relationship with God is back and stronger. All in all I can look in the mirror and I like who I see. Through the grace of God, sponsorship, and the AA program I have been sober since May 26, 2008.

Father Val LaFrance Passes Away

Bon voyage, Servant!

He referred to himself as "the Dominican preacher." Officially, he was his order's "Provincial Secretary of Preaching for the Dominicans."



He was dearly loved by hundreds of thousands whose lives he touched with his recovery preaching ministry. He was in recovery himself from alcoholism and drug addiction. And he was a Guest House alumnus.

Father Valerian "Val" La France was, most of all, our friend. We are saddened to report that Father passed away at the age of 89 on July 2 at St. Dominic Priory in Washington, D.C.

A 1981 graduate of Guest House, Fr. Val was proud of his French/Iroquois descent and he was renowned for his powerful preaching style as well as his sincere, personal testimony as a recovering alcoholic. Everywhere Fr. Val preached, he also mentioned his Guest House experience. In the last year of his life, Fr. Val told us he intended to preach exclusively for the benefit of Guest House.

In his talks, Fr. Val combined humor with strong dramatic delivery, a skill he honed on the stage as a young man during his years as an actor with formal Shakespearean training. In 1990, Father spoke to an enthralled audience of over 300 at the Detroit Bishop's Dinner in Detroit.

In 2006, Father Val joined us at Guest House's 50th Anniversary celebration in Washington, D.C. at the Apostolic Nunciature to the Holy See. The event, at which three Guest House alumni spoke, was hosted by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States.

Most recently, Father was featured in the Summer 2009 issue of the Guest House Newsletter at the time of his 50th Anniversary of the Priesthood.

In the hundreds of testimonials and well wishes that have resulted after Father's death, perhaps one individual said it best. He concluded his remarks with what Jesus might have said upon Father Val's arrival at Heaven: "Well done my good and faithful servant!"



Women Religious in Treatment – A Special Group with Special Needs

Guest House opened its program for sisters and women in formation in Lake Orion, Michigan, in 1994. There have been some 400 sisters cared for since then, from very diverse ministries. They have included school principals and teachers; hospital administrators, nurses and staff; and, counselors, mission sisters, college professors, and women from “cloistered” or contemplative communities.

Most of them, however, have these things in common: when they enter treatment, they feel ashamed, hurt, angry and exposed because their “secret” has been revealed. Many are afraid, upset, and, in some cases, depressed. Their “secret” can range from alcohol or prescription drug abuse, to overeating or other eating disorders, to gambling or spending compulsions.

Most recently our Program for Women Religious has received a number of requests from leadership to take into our care sisters with compulsive collecting/

storing behaviors. The medical community has termed this “hoarding.” Like other addictions and compulsions, it can take over a sister’s life—even affect her physical health—and seriously complicate or destroy her ministry.

While in treatment at Guest House, our sisters learn about the disease of addiction, the effects it has on the brain, how it’s a chronic disease, and that it can be genetic. They are made aware of the realities of relapse, and of the effect addiction can have on their spirituality. The importance of spirituality for a quality and lasting recovery is emphasized.

Finally, the sisters learn about forgiveness, self-care, positive change and—in truth—how to love themselves again. They return to their vocation in mental and physical healthfulness—with knowledge, a deeper spirituality, and a new outlook on life!

Development Department

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www.guesthouse.org

Guest House Centers:

- Management Services Offices, Lake Orion Treatment Center, and Recovery Residence Lake Orion, Michigan
- Rochester Treatment Center Rochester, Minnesota
- Guest House at St. John Vianney Downingtown, Pennsylvania
- Friendship House Mangalore, India

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