



*The Bergamo Center for Lifelong Learning*  
Fall 2025



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# The Bergamo Break

*Pause, pray, and stay connected with the latest news at Bergamo*

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## ISP Helps Men and Women Recovering from Homelessness & Addiction

*by Allison Loecke, ISP staff member*

On a sunny day this past February, members of the Ignatian Spirituality Project (ISP) women's team gathered at Bergamo for a training day. Together, we walked through the movements of a retreat, covered logistics, and reviewed best practices for a successful weekend. What struck me most about our time together was that it wasn't just about what we needed to *do* to make a retreat successful—it was about who we needed to *be*: vulnerable, authentic, joyful, honest. These qualities stood out among those gathered, and they are the key to everything we do at ISP. Our training day wasn't just about the to-do list; it was about reconnecting, sharing moments of grace, and affirming the goodness we see in one another.



ISP invites people recovering from homelessness and addiction to experience God's unconditional love, hope, and healing through overnight retreats, spiritual accompaniment, and reflection opportunities. Founded in Chicago in 1998, ISP now serves 20 cities across the United States and began in Dayton in 2010. As staff and team members, we walk alongside participants, offering our own stories of pain and healing as we listen to theirs. Leaders and participants alike are reminded of their inherent dignity and worth, and all leave feeling beloved by God and by those around the circle. As one recent participant said, "This retreat is what I needed in my life. It gives me hope that there are people that care about me and show love."

Here in Dayton, our teams host four men's and women's overnight retreats per year, two one-day alumni retreats (all at Bergamo), and regular spiritual reflections at Saint Vincent de Paul, Mercy Manor, Full Circle, and DeCoach. Last year, we brought a group of women from Saint Vincent de Paul to Bergamo for lunch and time to connect and pray amid the beauty of Mount Saint John. At the heart of ISP is the belief that everyone deserves the chance to nurture a relationship with God—something echoed in Pope Leo's first apostolic exhortation *Dilexi Te*, which reminds us that "the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care." We are always looking for new volunteers to join our teams and for more ways to connect with the community.

To learn more or get involved, please visit our website [www.ispretreats.org](http://www.ispretreats.org) or email Allison at [aloecke@ispretreats.org](mailto:aloecke@ispretreats.org).

## Give the Gift of Peace

**Purchase a giftcard for a Day of Rest & Healing or an overnight retreat for a friend or loved one. Call us at (937) 426-2363 or email [info@bergamocenter.org](mailto:info@bergamocenter.org).**

RETREAT  
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CERTIFICATE

TO : \_\_\_\_\_  
FROM : \_\_\_\_\_  
DAYS: \_\_\_\_\_ NIGHTS: \_\_\_\_\_ MEALS: \_\_\_\_\_

BERGAMO STAFF SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

TO CHECK AVAILABILITY AND BOOK YOUR RETREAT, PLEASE  
EMAIL [info@bergamocenter.org](mailto:info@bergamocenter.org) OR CALL (937) 426-2363.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO BERGAMO!



# Join us for Bergamo's School of Prayer Advent Series

Deepen your spiritual life this Advent – learn from and pray with the Bergamo Center's spiritual directors!

**SATURDAYS IN DECEMBER, 9AM-1PM  
(INCLUDES LUNCH AND COFFEE)**

## DECEMBER 6

Prayers and Prayer:  
A School of Prayer



JOE MCHUGH



STEPHEN RIVET

## DECEMBER 13

Gaudete! Rejoice!  
through Visio Divina



MICHELLE SHERMAN

## DECEMBER 20

Preparing with Mary for  
the Coming of Christ



FR. TOM SCHROER, SM

Registration and more info -> QR code or  
[www.bergamocenter.org/adult-programs](http://www.bergamocenter.org/adult-programs)



## Faces of Bergamo: Meet Andrés López!

Please tell us about yourself.

*My name is Andrés López. I was born and raised in El Paso, Texas, a border city with Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México. Many of us call it "la frontera más fabulosa y bella del mundo", the most fabulous and beautiful border in the world. Growing up at the borderland taught me to see how both beauty and pain coexist and how God is present in the Nepantla, the in-between.*

*I moved to Dayton in July 2023. I serve as the Hispanic/LatinX and Neighborhood Campus Minister at the University of Dayton, and I also work here at Bergamo as a Weekend Guest Services Coordinator. I am passionate about social justice, faith, community building and the preferential option for the poor.*



*Outside of ministry, I'm a very family-oriented person who enjoys being at home, spending time with loved ones, and cheering for the FC Juárez soccer team. In 2022, I was honored with the Santo Toribio Romo Award by the Catholic Foundation of the Diocese of El Paso for my service to refugees and migrants. My motto is: In Lak'éch, Tu eres mi otro yo, You are my other me.*

**How have you been involved with Bergamo/the Mount Saint John property?**

*I started working at Bergamo in August 2024. Like previously mentioned, I work as a Weekend Guest Services Coordinator. In this role, I assist guests during their retreats/stay at Bergamo by checking them in, answering questions for them, helping them with any basic needs they might have, and ensuring they have a positive and peaceful experience during their time with us.*



**What is a highlight of your involvement at Bergamo?**

*What I've enjoyed most about working at Bergamo is the opportunity to meet people. Whether it's welcoming a group that just arrived, helping with a late-night need, or simply offering a smile. Small acts of kindness make Bergamo a sacred space where people can have a sacred experience. A highlight for me at Bergamo was reuniting with my hometown friend whom I have been friends with for about 18 years but had not seen in about 5 years. We hugged each other, cried and gave*

*thanks to God for having us brought back together thanks to the Society of Mary and the Marianist Charism. She works at St. Mary's University and I work at UD, both Marianist universities. From the borderland to Ohio, embracing in the beautiful grounds of Mt. St. John.*

**What are your hopes for Bergamo's guests and the organization?**

*I hope retreatants leave Bergamo with a renewed sense of peace, and a stronger relationship with God. I want them to feel that they are not just visitors, but part of a spiritual home and that they feel they are always welcomed back at Bergamo. My prayer is that they experience what In Lak'éch expresses so beautifully: "Tú eres mi otro yo, You are my other me."*

*If people leave Bergamo feeling more connected to God, to others, and to themselves, then we truly live out our Marianist mission of making Christ present in the world as Mary did.*

### **Andres' I Am Poem**

*Andrés*

*Always smiling, quiet, honest, and punctual*

*Son of Salvador and María.*

*Lover of life, family, and friends.*

*Who feels pain in the face of injustice, poverty, and human exclusion that promotes a throwaway culture.*

*Who needs God in his daily life.*



*Who gives his best in everything he does.*

*Who fears the time when his loved ones are gone.*

*Who dreams of a world concerned with the common good where the preferential option for the poor, the excluded, the marginalized, and those discarded by society, including care for the environment, are placed at the center.*

*Who sees life pass by at a glimpse of an eye.*

*Who wants to make a positive impact in the world.*

*Who hopes that people would not suffer but that they achieve inner peace.*

*Resident of Dayton, Ohio but always a Fronterizo. Juárez y El Paso siempre en el corazón.*

*López*



**BERGAMO**  
**12 DAYS OF**  
**CHRISTMAS**  
**BAKING CLASS**  
**& FUNDRAISER**

Bake 12 different kinds of cookies over three sessions!

**December 2025**

Taught by **Bill Evans**,  
Master baker, Former  
Owner/Operator of Evans  
Bakery in North Dayton,  
former Executive Director  
of the House of Bread.

Click this image to fill  
out an interest form.



**Plan Your  
Organization's  
Christmas Party at  
Bergamo!**

Planning your parish, school, or  
company Christmas gathering?  
Bergamo's cozy facilities and  
upgraded dining services would be  
a perfect fit! While Bergamo is busy  
much of the year, **dates are still  
open in December.** While the  
weather outside might be frightful,  
our Fireplace Lounge is so  
delightful! See below for contact  
information.



## Fall Highlights

It has been another eventful fall with our beloved retreat center bursting at the seams with our many guests! We had a few first time guest groups that we were delighted to welcome, including the St. Leonard Ladies Faith Community and the Covington, KY Deacons and wives. In addition, we were excited to be able to offer our Bergamo-sponsored Spiritus Retreat to a group of Ursuline Academy juniors. In fact, we look forward to seeing their next group of juniors in February!

Of course, we are equally delighted to welcome back some of our regular groups as well. The Seton Teaching Fellows, a one-year post-graduate teacher missionary program where Fellows sign up to love and serve underserved communities, came here for the second year in a row! The Visitation State Community, a Marianist Lay Community, came here for their bi-annual retreat; they have been coming to Bergamo for decades! A couple of other groups that are part of the Marianist Family also joined us this Fall - UD's New Beginnings and UD's Campus Ministry Team.

We also sponsored our St. John XXIII celebration of Bergamo's patron saint! Over 130 guests joined for prayer, dinner, and learning about Bergamo's history and current programming. We enjoyed celebrating with all who attended!



We hope all of our guests have enjoyed the beautiful fall weather and changing leaves on the grounds of Mt. St. John!



## BERGAMO WINTER ARRIVALS



December	January	February
<p>Villa Madonna HS Jr Retreat Mother of God Parish Family Confirmation Retreat Bergamo's Advent Prayer Series</p> 	<p>DePaul Cristo Rey HS Senior Kairos Retreat Retrouvaille Wright Field Scale Modelers Alter HS Jr Retreat (x2) Elder HS Jr Retreat CJ HS Senior Kairos Glenmary Missionaries Ohio Chapter of Illuman Immaculate Conception - Celina - Jr Retreat Alter HS Kairos Retreat Moeller HS Senior Kairos Haller Scrapbooking Retreat St. Brigid of Kildare Men's Retreat</p>	<p>Urusline Jr Retreat Mount Notre Dame Jr Retreat Seton Kairos UD Writing Retreat Quilt Dreamers Hartley Jr./Sr. Retreat Moeller Sr 4th Day Retreat World's Greatest Retreat</p> 

## 3 Minute Retreat

**Pause.** Breathe deeply. Slowly read the following passage three times.

*"You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance"*  
(Matt 28: 5-7)

**Reflect.** What "hard pathways" are you experiencing right now? How can you offer them to God, so that God might use them to produce good fruit?

**Pray.** Christ, let your Spirit grow in me. Amen.

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## Connect with Us

Spend the day at Bergamo! Attend an upcoming Day of Rest and Healing:  
*December - many dates available, contact us below for more information*  
*January 5, 9, 27*  
*February 9-12, 17-20*

Find more information on our website: [www.bergamocenter.org](http://www.bergamocenter.org) (under "Adult Programs")

Interested in booking a group? Call us at (937) 426-2363 or email [info@bergamocenter.org](mailto:info@bergamocenter.org).

Check out photos from your group's visit to Bergamo and other updates on our Facebook and Instagram pages!



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## Join Our Cause

Please consider supporting Bergamo's mission of providing excellent programming and facilities.

**Donate**

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*The Bergamo Center 4400 Shakertown Rd., Dayton, OH 45430*





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