



# INSTITUTE OF CHRIST THE KING SOVEREIGN PRIEST

July 26, 2023

Faithful Friend of the Institute of Christ the King,

## **A new chapter in our life in the United States has begun.**

Until now, Catholics in the United States have come to know the canons, oblates and sisters of the Institute primarily in a parish setting, entrusted with meeting the daily sacramental and pastoral needs of Catholic families. While the members of the Institute continue to give themselves joyfully to this essential apostolate, we have always combined parish work with a more universal apostolate: the spiritual, intellectual and moral formation of young people and adults outside the daily life of the parish. The fruits of this apostolate over the past 25 years can be seen in the steady growth of our youth camps and young adult programs and in the burgeoning membership in the Society of the Sacred Heart, our lay society for adults who live the spirituality of the Institute according to a daily rule of life.

We have now grown to a point where this work of formation requires a permanent home. We have been searching for a property with sufficient land for youth activities, space for prayer and recollection, comfortable lodging, and a large chapel. Such a property will not only meet our current needs but allow us to expand our youth camps and offer retreats to adults throughout the year. The spiritual retreat, founded on silence, Eucharistic adoration, daily instruction, and the sacred liturgy, is essential to the life of clerics and religious. It is also a great means of sanctification which the canons of the Institute are called to offer to laypeople. We need a property where people will immediately find themselves at home, surrounded by images of our holy patrons, and strengthened by the presence of the community to which they are so intimately connected. It will be a place where the community of clerics will offer Holy Mass, be available for confessions, and chant the Divine Office throughout the day, providing a framework for people wishing to retreat from the world for a time. Here our faithful friends and newcomers alike will find a thorough introduction to the devout life as proposed by St. Francis de Sales, a school for the service of the Lord as taught by St. Benedict, and a rich ground for growth in the virtues according to the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas.

**Divine Providence has shown us the home we were looking for. We welcome you to Burlington.**



*You shall draw waters in joy from the fountains of the Savior. – Is. 12:3*

Burlington is a small town in the southeastern corner of the state of Wisconsin, celebrated for generations as “Chocolate City, USA” thanks to the presence of a Nestle factory and a chocolate museum. The surrounding region is just as well known for its many hiking trails and recreational lakes. Located an hour’s drive north of Chicago O’Hare Airport and 35 minutes south of Milwaukee Mitchell Airport, Burlington is within a day’s drive of all our apostolates in the central United States.

## A Rich History

In the early 20th century, Burlington became home to a friary and seminary for the Franciscans of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1931, St. Francis Friary was built along what is now Browns Lake Drive. The already impressive edifice was greatly expanded by the addition of a north wing in 1952. St. Francis Friary is on the National Register of Historic Places as a “preeminent example of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style in Racine County.” In its heyday, the site was well known and loved by Catholics of the northern Midwest as a popular pilgrimage destination. Given its future use as a universal apostolate of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, considering especially the spiritual needs of our lay society, it is fitting that the property shall be known henceforth as **Sacred Heart Retreat Center**.



## A Path Forward

It has been over ten years since the friary building has been regularly occupied, although standard structural maintenance has continued. Thankfully, a thorough inspection has revealed the property to be in overall good condition. The main building is structurally sound. The roof will not need replacement for another twenty years, and the brickwork, while in need of attention to protect against water damage, can be tuckpointed on our own timetable. The electrical system is mostly up to date and in line with all current codes. The boilers, plumbing and septic system are undergoing minor repairs and updates so they will be fully operational. With some clearing and landscaping, the 100 acres of beautiful grounds can be put to its intended use: sports and games for our youth and quiet meditation and reflection for those who come on retreat.

With a favorable mortgage obtained by our legal and finance teams, we completed the purchase of the property this past May. Thus, the main focus of our fundraising efforts will happily be improvements and furnishings rather than structural repairs, in addition to the cost of paying down the mortgage. If our efforts are successful, this property will be hosting a full regular schedule of activities by the end of 2024.

The Institute has experience operating retreat houses in Germany, France, and Switzerland and has taken the time to study the operational structure of other functioning retreat centers in the United States. Once all initial renovations are completed and the property is running with a full schedule of activities, such as weekly spiritual retreats and young adult weekends, it will take another several years and the development of additional income sources on the property before the apostolate is able to cover its annual operating costs. However, we have a



mind to accomplish this task, and we firmly believe that people around the nation will see the great value of this mission. It is with a spirit of courage and trust in Divine Providence that we are moving forward.

**The time has come for us to ask for your help.** In order to accomplish the full restoration of our new property and open its doors as soon as possible, we have envisaged raising **\$9.7 million** in three phases:

### Phase One – \$900,000

In order to begin using the property, we need an immediately functional space. We are now obtaining bids to remodel the third-floor north wing of the building. Completing this phase will allow the on-site clerics to host visitors, volunteers, and even summer camps as the main restoration begins:



- Updating the flooring, new windows, and furnishings; painting the walls in all rooms and hallways; and installing tile flooring and new fixtures in four bathrooms ~ **\$250,000**



- Repurposing the conference room into a chapel for the clerics and smaller retreats. The room needs painting, flooring, updated fixtures, and appropriate furnishings for the sacred liturgy ~ **\$150,000**

- Remodeling the commercial kitchen, refitting the walk-in freezers and fire suppression system, and purchasing new appliances. This will allow for health department certification before visitors are allowed ~ **\$150,000**



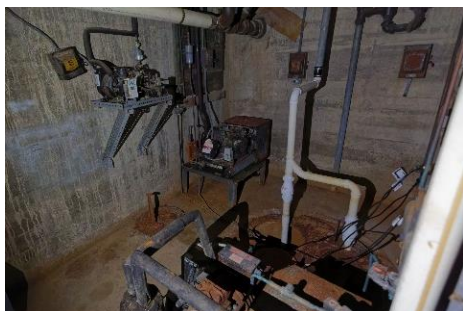
- Clearing of brush and debris from the grounds, restoration and expansion of the path system in the woods, and renovating existing detached buildings into bath, shower, and kitchen facilities for our youth camps ~ **\$150,000**

- Without parishioners, the facility does not have a steady stream of donations and will need to keep up with electricity, heat, maintenance, groundskeeping, food and household supplies, clerical work, and other operating expenses. We need a fund of at least **\$200,000** to cover these costs over the first few months.

### Phase Two – \$3,800,000

We have estimated major renovation costs will be incurred over the course of the year 2024, as the team works to expand operations and offer a full schedule of activities. All our figures are rough estimates, as it is difficult to pinpoint construction costs in the current economy. We have set these amounts as reasonable targets. If actual costs are lower, any excess funds raised will be used to bolster the operations of the retreat center. In the meantime, we hope to complete the following:

- Updating of the HVAC system, including new heating units and the installation of air conditioning throughout the building ~ **\$1,200,000**



- Renovation of the bathrooms throughout the remainder of the building: new sinks, fixtures and showers, plumbing updates, windows and vent repairs, paper products and supplies. We also need to install private bathrooms in at least one-third of the bedrooms for the convenience and privacy of retreat participants ~ **\$400,000**



- Full renovation of the interior of the building, including new flooring, ceilings, and windows in many of the hallways and rooms. Painting, drywall repair, and preservation of the beautiful wood trim ~ **\$1,650,000**



- The entire facility must be furnished: beds, mattresses, desks, chairs, lamps; common area couches and tables; office desks and file cabinets; conference center chairs, folding chairs, refectory tables and chairs; bed and bath linens, laundry machines; and outdoor tables and chairs ~ **\$550,000**



### Phase Three – \$5,000,000

Once these essential renovations are completed, we will focus on the final steps necessary to make the property truly beautiful and welcoming. These projects will allow the property to function at full capacity, host large retreats and summer camps, and provide a fitting and dignified space for solemn liturgies:

- Restoration of the main chapel, which is structurally sound but entirely stripped of furnishings, with no altar or altar rail. The floor and walls need refinishing and both the main chapel organ and choir organ also need serious repair or replacement ~ **\$1,200,000**
- Paying off the property mortgage and startup loan funds entirely within three years ~ **\$2,800,000**



- Renovation of the auditorium, including new flooring and a sound system with proper acoustics ~ **\$100,000**
- Tuckpointing of the exterior walls for weather-proofing and maintaining structural integrity ~ **\$300,000**
- Repaving of the driveways and parking lots ~ **\$400,000**
- Planting new gardens and restoration of the stations of the Cross and other sacred structures on the grounds ~ **\$200,000**

### Will you help us?

While we are very grateful for any one-time gift you are prepared to make, if you are able to make a greater monetary pledge extended over three years, such a generous contribution will go a long way toward securing the future of our new Retreat Center. **Enclosed is a pledge form detailing how you can give.**

Please consider joining us in this great new mission for the good of souls in honor of the Most Sacred Heart of Our Savior. I ask for your prayers for good success and assure you of ours at the holy Altar of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ the King,

Rev. Canon Matthew Talarico  
Provincial Superior