



BETHANY RETREAT HOUSE

2202 Lituanica Ave * East Chicago, IN 46312 * 219-398-5047

CASE STATEMENT

In the high stress and hustle and bustle of contemporary life, there is a great need for people to have spaces of quiet for reflection, for rest, for prayer, for centering, for re-grouping. Too often people do not know how to provide for this needed balance and do not know how to find or create a peaceful space.

“Constant noise at work and at home, Muzak [elevator music] in the malls, cell phones and beepers, jet engines and police sirens. Finding a place for peace and quiet is not always easy, but it is frequently necessary to maintain a healthy balance in life.” (*Praying Magazine*, 1/15/98)

The mission of Bethany Retreat House is to serve as an ecumenical place of silence in the midst of demanding lives where people can find both the space and the resources for prayer and reflection. Rooted in the mission of Jesus Christ, Bethany Retreat House is dedicated to helping individuals nurture their inner life and respond to the God who dwells within. Established in August, 1992, Bethany Retreat House is a ministry of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, an IRS designated 501(c)(3) organization.

Located in a comfortable neighborhood home setting in East Chicago, IN, Bethany Retreat House welcomes adult members of the laity, clergy and religious of all faiths. Bethany offers an intimate silent environment, three comfortable private guest rooms, home-cooked meals, a chapel and a beautiful meditation garden, all of which are available to guests as they rest, read, reflect, journal and pray. There is an extensive library of books, tapes, videos and music available to guests.

The retreat experience at Bethany is tailored to meet guests' specific needs and preferences. Current retreat offerings include: a daytime or overnight day of prayer; individually directed and private retreats varying in length from two days to a week or more; the 30-day Ignatian Exercises; and, the Ignatian Retreat in Daily Life.

Bethany also offers ongoing spiritual direction, a one-on-one reflective conversation with a trained spiritual director for the purpose of recognizing God in one's everyday life. Spiritual direction sessions are held at the retreat house and at two local parishes in Northwest Indiana. A women's group, two ministry reflection groups, a dream group and a peer supervision group for spiritual directors offer spiritual growth opportunities on a monthly basis.

Sr. Joyce Diltz, PHJC, who has more than 30 years experience as a spiritual director and retreat director, is the ministry leader at Bethany Retreat House. Sr. Joyce is assisted by one part-time staff person. More than 300 people spent reflective time at Bethany in 2006. The guest book lists retreatants from throughout the Midwest and from as far away as England, Mexico and Germany.

Bethany Retreat House offers a bookstore where retreatants can purchase a wide variety of spiritual reading material from both classical and contemporary writers. Sr. Joyce frequently takes the bookstore into the community to sell a comprehensive selection of books on prayer, spirituality, loss and grieving, journaling, midlife transition, women's issues, personal growth and self-help.

Bethany Retreat House generates revenues from retreat and spiritual direction fees, bookstore sales and donations from individuals, foundations and corporations. These revenues provide underwriting for the expenses of operating the retreat center as well as for scholarships for guests unable to pay for the full cost of a retreat or spiritual direction.

The Retreat House benefits from in-kind support from a dedicated corps of volunteers who assist with gardening, mailings, household tasks and special projects. However, in order to provide a well-maintained and accessible place for quiet and spiritual renewal, it takes more than the help of volunteers, book sales and retreat fees to support Bethany Retreat House. Historically, Bethany is partially subsidized by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, an international congregation of women religious within the Roman Catholic Church. The changing demographics of the congregation have prompted the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ to look beyond their own resources to support their wide-ranging ministries that impact the needy and underserved.

As a ministry matures and develops the capacity to demonstrate community benefits, it becomes attractive to donors and foundations that recognize the ministry contribution to an enhanced quality of life. To that end, the Bethany Fund has been created. The goal is to raise \$300,000 for a permanent fund which will generate sufficient interest income to make Bethany a financially self-sustaining ministry. Donors are encouraged to share financial resources and become our partners in these efforts to provide an ecumenical quiet place for prayer and reflection.

Time at Bethany frequently produces a life changing experience which encourages self-confidence, enhances the ability to relate to others and promotes a sense of connectedness to God and all of creation. Participants in a Bethany retreat return to the hustle and bustle of everyday life renewed and ready to respond to family members, coworkers and friends in a caring and compassionate manner.

Blessed Catherine Kasper, the foundress of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, lived her life guided by and in communion with the Holy Spirit whom she called "the voice within." Her attentiveness to this inner voice led her to build a "little house" as a place of prayer and Christian service. In the Poor Handmaid tradition of simple, caring presence, Bethany Retreat House is a "little house" in the city where people find quiet space and guidance in learning to recognize and respond to "the voice within."