

St. Joseph's Abbey Retreat House

Information and Policies

2015

Basic Facts about a retreat at St. Joseph's Abbey

St. Joseph's Abbey is a monastic community of the Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance, commonly known as Trappists, (cf. www.spencerabbey.org). There are twelve houses of monks and five houses of nuns (Trappistines) throughout the United States (cf. www.trappist.org). We are a contemplative Order, following the Rule of St. Benedict. Our common prayer consists of the daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours and Mass, as well as times of solitary prayer and lectio divina (spiritual reading). We are happy to share the peace and solitude of our life with those who come for retreat.

The Retreat House at St. Joseph's Abbey has eleven single rooms, each with private bath. There are two retreats per week: Monday afternoon to Friday morning or Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. Meals are provided. A conference is given by one of the monks on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for weekday retreats, and on Saturday and Sunday for the weekend retreat, with time available for private conversation with him or the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Guests are welcome to join us for the Liturgy of the Hours and Mass in the Abbey Church: Vigils at 3:30 am, Lauds followed by Mass at 6:00 am on weekdays and 6:40 am on weekends, None at 2:00 pm, Vespers at 5:40 pm and Compline at 7:40 pm. Guests attend Lauds, Mass and Vespers in the church in a section reserved for them. They attend the others hours from side chapels located at the entrance of the church.

Offerings for a retreat

The Retreat House at the Abbey is not an income-generating business but a ministry of the community. Our aim is simply to provide a pleasant retreat experience and cover our expenses. **The suggested offering is \$100 per night per retreatant.** If your offering

exceeds the suggested amount, you may be able to declare the excess amount as a tax deductible offering.

We request a \$75 non-refundable deposit when making a retreat reservation.

This deposit will be put toward your total offering for the retreat. Deposits may be paid by credit card – Visa or Master Card – or by check by mail. If you cancel your retreat at least one month before your retreat date, you may transfer your deposit to another available date. Special circumstances may be discussed with our Guest Master either by phone: 508-885-8710, or by email: www.retreats@spencerabbey.org.

Food and Meals

Three meals per day are provided. We serve a light breakfast after the morning Mass consisting of a variety of cereals, breads, fruit and yogurt. The main meal of the day is served at 12:00 noon. It usually consists of meat or fish, vegetable, salad and a desert. Supper is served after Vespers and consists of a single entree with soup or salad on the side. If you are not going to be present at a meal please inform the Guest Master.

After meals our guests are invited to help wash the dishes and prepare the tables for the next meal. Guests work in the pantry area, while the Guest Master works in the kitchen. Guests are not permitted to enter the kitchen,

When you make your reservation please inform the Guest Master of any food allergies or special dietary needs that you may have.

Communications

Silence is an important part of a retreat at the Abbey. We encourage our guests to embrace this silence during their retreat. The areas outdoors or the parlors are suitable for conversation. Please close the doors so that conversations do not carry into the corridors where guest rooms are located. Retreatants are requested not to visit one another in their

rooms, for the sake of respecting one another's solitude and to keep the atmosphere of silence and quiet for all.

There are no internet services in the Retreat House for guests. Cell phones are to be used outside or in one of the parlors but not in a retreatant's room. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building.

Normally, members of the monastic community are not available to meet with retreatants. We ask you, therefore, not to contact any of the monks directly. If you need to speak with one of the monks please see the Guest Master and he will help you.

No one is permitted to enter the enclosure of the monastery.

Emergencies and Ease of Access

After Compline, in case of an emergency, there is a phone on the desk in the Guest Master's office. You may use this to dial 911, or you may dial extension 507 to reach someone in our Infirmary. In case of medical emergencies, our normal procedure is to send someone to a local hospital via ambulance.

Our Retreat House and Monastery facilities are challenging for those with disabilities. There are many steps which must be negotiated and guests must walk about a quarter of a mile from the Retreat House to the church. If you have mobility limitations, please be aware that there will be difficulty moving from building to building.

Proper Attire

Informal clothing is appropriate for your retreat. However, as a sign of respect for the monastic environment, we ask that shorts and sleeveless shirts not be worn at the liturgy in the Abbey Church

Groups

Because our Retreat House is small and only has eleven rooms, we are not able to take large groups. If a small group of eleven or less would like to come together we are able at times to accommodate them. Please contact the Guest Master for further information.