

"Souls of prayer are souls of  
great silence."  
- St. Theresa of Calcutta







# ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

May 26, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I would like to inform you about a new apostolate called Patris Corde Hermitage, which is dedicated to providing a place for silent prayer and encounter with God.

The organizers, John and Ashleigh Ryan, plan to build sixteen small, simple retreat huts on their property near Parshall, Colorado. These huts are referred to as poustinias, a word that comes from the Russian word for desert and is rooted in the Eastern Christian tradition of going to a deserted place to pray. The Hermitage grounds will also feature a small, stone chapel for the celebration of Mass and prayer.

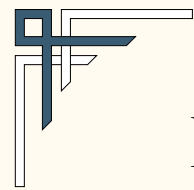
The Ryans first experienced the beauty and depth of silent retreat at a retreat center in Minnesota called Pacem in Terris. For the last 10 years they have heard a call to establish a similar retreat center in the Archdiocese of Denver and have been encouraged in their efforts by the late Monsignor Michael Glenn, numerous other priests and lay people.

After meeting with the Ryans and reviewing their plans, I would like to offer my support as Archbishop of Denver to this effort, as it has the potential to bear great spiritual fruit in the lives of many of the faithful and clergy in our archdiocese and beyond. Thank you for any support you can provide this worthy apostolate.

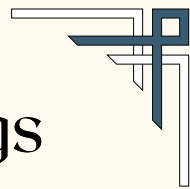
Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L.  
Archbishop of Denver





# Patris Corde Hermitage Beginnings



We moved to Colorado from Minnesota nearly 20 years ago, and growing up, we were both impacted by going on retreat at Pacem in Terris, a silent hermitage retreat center in Minnesota. In 2012 the Lord put in our hearts the desire to build and take care of a retreat center for priests and lay faithful in the Archdiocese of Denver, and over the years this desire was strongly affirmed by priests that we knew and loved.



“ Priests need poustinia prayer. ”

In 2017, we founded and began donating to Saint Joseph's Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides funding for the building of this hermitage retreat center. Finally in 2020, this vision was confirmed through support from Archbishop Aquila. Through the intercession of St. Joseph, we have been led to the land that will provide a place where Catholics can come retreat to encounter the love of the Father in silence and solitude.

With the help of our children and other workers, we are completing our third year of construction - John builds full time and Ashleigh supports the design and building efforts. The world desperately needs the witness of priests and laity whose lives overflow with divine intimacy. We are honored to be part of providing this place of refreshment for our priests and lay people who are pursuing union with God.



The late Monsignor Michael Glenn has been instrumental in supporting this mission, blessing the property and saying mass near the current retreat center location the day after we purchased the property in 2017. His constant encouragement to us before he passed to eternity was: "Priests need poustinia prayer." The end of this year will mark the completion of the Saint Francis and Saint Ignatius Hermitages as well as the Chapel foundation and other infrastructure, and our prayer and plan is to open this hermitage retreat center in 2023. We urgently seek your prayers for our family's protection, guidance, and faithfulness to this assignment.

*John and Ashleigh Ryan*

Poustinia: Desert place of encounter with God in silence and simplicity,  
traditionally in a hermitage or small prayer cabin.

## Our Mission

We believe that God wants to be present to each of us in a most profound way. We believe that the "noise" of the world is making it more and more difficult for us to hear Him and allow space for Him.

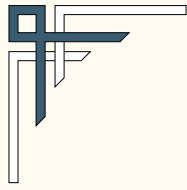
Scripture says: "He would withdraw to deserted places to pray."  
(Luke 5:16)

We believe we have been called to provide a place of silence, solitude, and simplicity where Catholic religious, laity, and those of sincere faith can empty themselves of the world's distractions and be filled with Him.

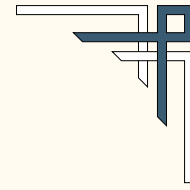
We invoke the constant intercession and protection of St. Joseph, who has been instrumental in every step of this vision and mission. Our prayer is:  
"Saint Joseph, father, man of silence, who was always present and obedient to God, we ask you to intercede for every retreatant who comes, that in this silence they may encounter the Father's Heart."







## Meet the Board of Directors



Since our beginning in 2017, the building of this retreat center has been funded and operated by Saint Joseph's Foundation, a private 501(c)(3) non-profit. As more of our support has come from the public over the past year, we have desired to have public oversight with a Board of Directors, and to this end we have received final IRS approval of Patris Corde Hermitage, a 501(c)(3) public charity that will take over the assets of Saint Joseph's Foundation. A special thanks to each of our Directors for their guidance and council.



**Ashleigh Ryan**

Ashleigh is the co-founder of Patris Corde Hermitage along with her husband John. While retreating at Pacem in Terris in Minnesota, she experienced the desire and need for this unique encounter with God. She and her husband heard a call to take care of a retreat center with their family that offered a similar place for others to encounter the Lord. Ashleigh is also a founding partner of Premier Payment Resources, a business that serves clients in the payment processing industry. She currently homeschools her six children and actively supports the development of Patris Corde Hermitage.



**Jason Simon**

Jason Simon is the President of the Evangelical Catholic. In 2007, he graduated with a Master's in Divinity from the University of Notre Dame and began leading the Evangelical Catholic. Under his leadership, the Evangelical Catholic has experienced consistent expansion in equipping Catholic laity for apostolic impact in the world. He has seen first-hand the power of lay evangelization fueled by the institution of the Church. Jason lives in Madison, WI with his wife and six children.



**Fr. Brady Wagner**

Father Brady Wagner is a priest for the Archdiocese of Denver and a member of the priestly association of the Companions of Christ. Ordained in 2011, he currently serves as the Director of the Spirituality Year, the first year of formation, at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver.



**Fr. John Nepil**

Father John Nepil is a priest of Denver, Colorado and a member of the priestly association of the Companions of Christ. Having completed a doctorate in dogmatic theology at the Pontifical University of Santa Croce in Rome, he now serves as vice-rector and professor of theology at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver.



**Ed Van Pelt**

Ed Van Pelt is currently CEO of Truth in Processing, a service centric organization supporting companies who utilize credit cards. Previously, Ed Van Pelt has begun and run businesses as well as held executive level positions with Carlson Companies, American Express, Rockwell International and Westinghouse. He is active in his Church and community, a former Trustee of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and a current board member of the Outpost Center, a nonprofit located in Chaska, MN. He and his wife Lisa have six children and reside in Chanhassen, MN.

"In a church deeply committed to the activity of the new evangelization, we need a complementary contemplation."

"The spirituality of *poustinia*, or hermitage retreat, descends from the most ancient days of the Church, when Christians fled a godless world to rediscover the world of God. The lonely place, *eremo* in the original Greek language, is where we derive the word "hermitage" - a solitary moment of retreat from the cares of self and into the care of God. In hermitage we learn again a basic truth: solitude is not an absence, but a deeper presence . . . In a church deeply committed to the activity of the new evangelization, we need a complementary contemplation; and this requires a physical place where, heeding the words of Christ, we 'come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while' (Mk. 6:31). We may do many things for God; but we will only be fruitful if those things flow from the life of prayer. For this reason, there seems to me no more important initiative in the Archdiocese of Denver than the foundation of Patris Corde Hermitage Retreat Center."

- Fr. John Nepil

"In John 10:27 Jesus promises that his sheep hear his voice. In the silence we can listen to the deepest of his words to us and find rest in his care. I make sure to leave everything behind to listen to his deep words for at least one week every year. He keeps me on his narrow path. He renews my apostolic zeal. He grounds me again in poverty of spirit and deep dependence on him. "If we remain in him, we will bear much fruit." For the renewal of the world, for lay and ordained, for ecclesial and secular mission, there is no other way to apostolic fruitfulness than to start with this deep connection to the heart of the Father in Jesus."

- Jason Simon

"I make sure to leave everything behind to listen to His deep words for at least one week every year."





**"I would like to offer my support as Archbishop of Denver to this effort, as it has the potential to bear great spiritual fruit in the lives of many of the faithful and clergy in our archdiocese and beyond. Thank you for any support you can provide this worthy apostolate."**

**- Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver**

**"Come away with me. Let us go alone to a quiet place and rest for a while."**

**- Mark 6:31**

Photo taken from the window of the  
St. Francis of Assisi Hermitage.



“Silence and solitude can be unnerving, especially in our age of noise and constant distraction. There can be fear in thinking about not having someone else to talk to. In many ways, this is precisely the privileged place of encounter with the Lord in the secrecy of our soul. Jesus not only frequently goes to pray alone with the Father, but he also desires that we do the same. I think of Moses and Elijah on Mount Sinai, how they were invited to be alone in their prayer which opened up for them a profound intimacy with the Lord, so much so that Moses’s face became radiant in splendor. But it must also be lamented how easy it is to forget that we are also surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, of angels and saints who are with us, actively interceding for us. This retreat into solitude sensitizes our hearts to the reality of the spiritual and the eternal.”

- Fr. Brady Wagner

# Progress in 2022

## Land Preparation

In the spring and summer of 2022, we continued clearing ground for the walking trail system.

## Utilities / Infrastructure

In the summer of 2022, we completed a 400 foot drain that will support the future water pumping and treatment equipment.

## Solar Power System

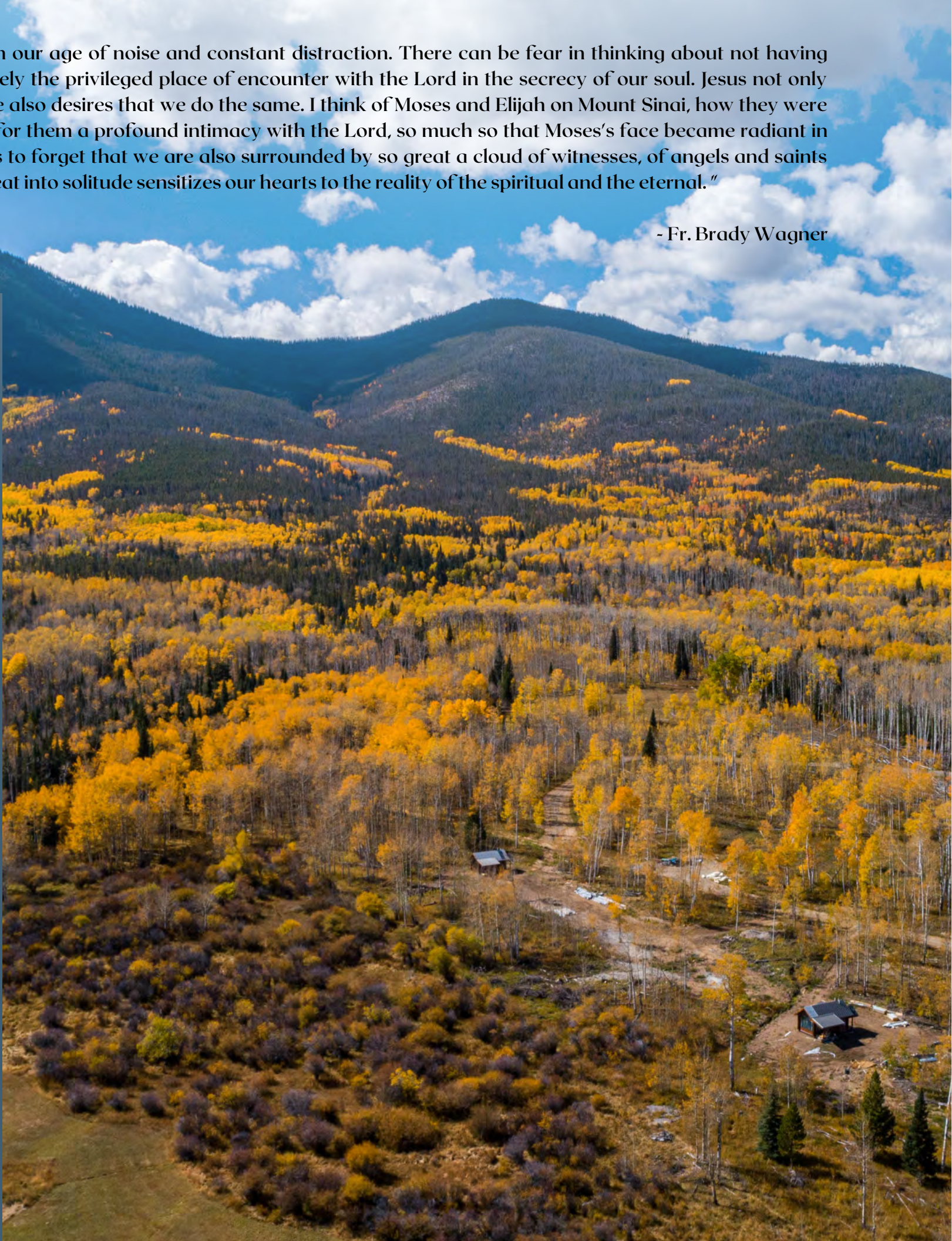
In the fall of this year, we completed the power building and installation of the solar system that will power the hermitages of Phase I in addition to the well and septic pumps. This system included batteries, inverter, and backup generator as well as additional gas infrastructure.

## Chapel Foundation

The chapel foundation was completed in the early summer of 2022 and awaits building in 2023.

## Construction of Hermitages

As of October, the first two hermitages are nearing completion, with roofing and final exterior trim in progress. The final steps will include flooring, interior trim, plumbing, and electrical. These building sites are pictured at right.



Chapel Foundation



Hermitage Under Construction



Solar Power Building





We are thankful to the Companions of Christ for their support of this mission from the beginning. Pictured are the Companions saying Mass on the chapel foundation during their 2022 "Bootcamp" retreat. Thanks also to the Companions for chipping and clearing the building sites and many acres of trail!

Pictured at left is the Saint Francis of Assisi Hermitage under construction - made possible by your generosity. Full completion is planned in the next months.

## Prayer Request: Legal Process to Obtain Water

As noted in our spring newsletter, we ask you to continue praying with us as we work to complete the legal process to obtain water for the retreat center hermitages and open to the public. We began the legal process to obtain water more than a year and a half ago, and as of September 1st we have completed and submitted all requested engineering reports with the hope of completion in the next months. The water needed for these hermitages is smaller than the equivalent residential well use, but because there will be retreatants staying overnight, we are required to submit and approve a use plan in order to apply for a commercial well.

We are thankful for the experience and expertise of the legal and engineering firms that are helping us. As the opening of this retreat center is contingent upon this approval, please pray for a quick and favorable resolution!

## Funding and Building Expenses

Total Donor Funds Received from Nov 1st, 2021 - Oct 31st, 2022: \$ 707,762.00

### Spending During 2022 Building Season:

Hermitages 1 & 2 .....	\$ 247,684.00
St. Joseph's Chapel .....	\$ 96,425.00
Power/Solar Infrastructure .....	\$ 68,581.00
Planning/Legal .....	\$ 49,216.00
Utilities & Land Improvement .....	\$ 19,277.00
Website & Promotional .....	\$ 5,838.00
Insurance/Tax Filing/Admin .....	\$ 4,875.00
<b>Funds Set Aside for Chapel &amp; 2023 Construction .....</b>	<b>\$ 215,866.00</b>

Total 2022 Building Expenses \$ 707,762.00





Patris Corde Hermitage Map

Single Occupant Cabins

Garage / Maintenance Building

Retreat Center

Chapel

Trail/Snow Groom

Existing Road

New Road

Parking Lot

200 yards

Images not shown to scale.

Building Phases and Estimated Construction Costs

Phase I

	Projected Cost
Completion of hermitages 1-6	\$870,000
Completion of chapel	\$610,500
Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Land clearing/walking trails/roads/parking</li><li>Water/gas/power/septic/planning and infrastructure for hermitages 1-6</li></ul>	\$510,000
Total Estimated Cost of Phase I	\$1,990,500
Total Donated Toward Phase I	(\$1,032,557)
Estimated Total to Complete Phase I	\$957,943



Phase II

	Projected Cost
Completion of hermitages 7-11	\$725,000
Remodel of retreat center <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Retreat center building, maintenance building, and land will be given to Patris Corde Hermitage</li></ul>	\$320,000
Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Land clearing/roads/parking/completion of walking trails</li><li>Water/gas/power/septic/planning and infrastructure for hermitages 7-11</li></ul>	\$543,000
Total Estimated Cost of Phase II	\$1,588,500



Phase III

	Projected Cost
Completion of hermitages 12-16	\$750,000
Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Water/gas/power/septic infrastructure for hermitages 12-16</li><li>Additional roads / parking</li></ul>	\$590,000
Total Estimated Cost of Phase III	\$1,340,000



Total Estimated Construction Cost \$4,919,000



# Building Saint Joseph's Chapel

"The most generous choices, especially the persevering, are the fruit of profound and prolonged union with God in prayerful silence."

- Saint John Paul II



## Request

We have been so blessed by all who have joined us in this mission of providing a place of rest, refreshment, and encounter with God for Catholic religious and lay faithful in the Archdiocese of Denver and beyond. Because of your generosity, we are completing both the Saint Francis of Assisi and the Saint Ignatius of Loyola hermitages, as well as the chapel foundation and critical Phase I solar power infrastructure.

As noted on page 7, we continue the process of obtaining our commercial well permit, which is necessary in order to open to the public. Our plan and prayer is to open Patris Corde Hermitage in August of 2023, with reservations beginning in the late Spring.

In 2023, our goal is to open Patris Corde Hermitage, complete the Chapel of Saint Joseph, and install final utilities and infrastructure prior to opening. In addition to what we have laid aside, the total needed to complete these items is \$568,846. Please consider a gift that will help us to open and to complete the chapel - an oratory dedicated to the Eucharist and to prayer for retreatants.

Patris Corde Hermitage is a registered public 501(c)(3) charity; our FEIN number is 88-0639678. God has blessed us to be able to cover the founders' time and labor in building and acting as general contractors. Because of this, we are able to use all outside donations very efficiently. To learn how to donate, please visit our website at [www.patriscorde.org](http://www.patriscorde.org).

Completion of Saint Joseph's Chapel .....	\$	367,375.00
Building and Maintenance Labor/Part Time Admin .....	\$	69,157.00
Well and Water Treatment System .....	\$	57,610.00
Planning/Legal .....	\$	31,580.00
Land Clearing/Landscaping .....	\$	24,510.00
Utilities .....	\$	9,420.00
Promotional/Administrative .....	\$	9,194.00
Total 2023 Fundraising Goal		\$ 568,846.00



"In a society that is often so replete with noise, contention of political ideologies, and disregard for what is sacred, our hearts hunger for and need to *listen* to the Lord God who speaks to us.

Priests, religious, and Catholic laity can benefit greatly from dedicated, consecrated spaces set aside for an encounter with God in stillness, through the beauty of His creation around us, but also by attending lovingly to His presence within the soul, which St. Teresa of Jesus called a 'little heaven . . . where the Maker of heaven and earth' is pleased to dwell (*Way of Perfection*, 28.5). Such an encounter with the Lord through faith heals us interiorly and wonderfully reveals to us our own great dignity as sons and daughters of God.

Our Church in the U.S. would benefit immeasurably from such opportunity at retreat centers like Patris Corde."

- Very Rev. Michael Berry, O.C.D., Provincial, Immaculate Heart of Mary Province,  
Discalced Carmelite Friars



Address: 10200 County Road 3, Parshall, CO 80468

Email: [john@patriscorde.org](mailto:john@patriscorde.org)

Patris Corde Hermitage is located 30 miles north of Silverthorne  
on Ute Pass Road / Grand County Road 3.

[www.patriscorde.org](http://www.patriscorde.org)

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