

Welcome to the Guesthouse at Holy Cross Monastery!

We are delighted that you have chosen to spend your time of retreat and relaxation with us. If there is anything that would make your stay more comfortable, please don't hesitate to speak to the Guestmaster, Br. Aidan or to our Guesthouse Manager, Lori Callaway. Both of them have offices located at the Monastery entrance.

Below you will find some information that may be helpful to your stay.

We pray that God will richly bless your time with us!

Holy Cross Monastery and the Order of the Holy Cross

Holy Cross Monastery is the oldest and largest community in the Order of the Holy Cross, an Anglican monastic order founded on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1884. We have been on this property since 1902, and are currently home to 17 monks ranging in age from 29 to 91 (as of 2019). Hospitality is our main ministry in this community, though we also offer spiritual direction, lead retreats, and serve in local parishes. We are about half ordained and half lay.

Our sister houses are Mount Calvary Monastery in Santa Barbara, CA (due to close in 2021); Holy Cross Priory in Toronto, Canada; and St. Benedict's Priory in Hermanas, South Africa.

Church

Common worship is the heart of our life, and we welcome you to join us for our Office and daily Eucharist. All services are located in St. Augustine's Church (see map). We ring the tower bell ten minutes before each service.

You are welcome to participate as fully as you would like in each of the services. Please follow the lead of the monastic community when it comes to pacing, volume, and pitch. We find that those who are trained musicians or who regularly lead worship need to pay particular attention to this issue.

The church is open at all times for silent prayer. You are also welcome to take pictures outside of worship times. All baptized Christians are welcome to receive communion. Should you wish to receive a blessing rather than the bread and wine, please come forward at communion with your arms crossed across your chest.

There is no required attendance in chapel.

The horarium (church schedule) is as follows:

7am: Matins
9am: Holy Eucharist
12 noon: Diurnum
5pm: Vespers
8pm: Compline

Silence and Quiet

We ask that, at all times, you maintain an atmosphere of quiet in the guesthouse in order to facilitate the retreat experience of fellow guests. Please keep conversations in public spaces, including outdoors, in low tones. Please do not have conversations in your guestroom; the walls are very thin. You are welcome to talk in St. Scholastica, outside of meal times, and also in St. Mary's Parlor, with the door closed.

We observe the Great Silence here at the Monastery, which means that the Guesthouse, grounds, and Monastery are in complete silence from 8.20pm (immediately following Compline) until 8.30am. The Great Silence extends to your meeting spaces as well.

We ask that, except in cases of emergency, you not violate the Great Silence with gestures or questions, even with the monastic community.

Meals

We ask you to gather near the refectory five minutes before each meal. A member of the monastic community will ring a bell when the meal is ready. At both dinner (noontime) and supper (evening), please form a circle around the middle tables, pushing as far toward the front of the refectory as you can, so that we can accommodate all guests for the blessing. After the blessing, those closest to the refectory entrance should begin the food line. Please don't be shy about beginning—it's the only way we'll all get through the line.

We do our best to provide for food allergies. At all meals there are vegetarian and gluten free options. If you have other allergies, please see our Guesthouse Manager, Lori Callaway. We regret that it is not always possible to provide for all food allergies.

Except on feast days, dinner is taken in silence with a reading for the first half of the meal, after which we can have conversation.

We ask that you do not help yourself to bread, peanut butter, jelly, or other food from the refectory outside of meal times. Should you be hungry at other times, there is always fresh fruit available in the coffee area.

St. Scholastica is always available for silent meals.

The meal schedule is as follows:

7.35am: breakfast (silent)
12.30pm: dinner (main meal)
6pm: supper

You are warmly welcome to join Br. Aidan, other guests, and members of the monastic community for afternoon tea on Thursdays, from 3.30 – 4.30pm in St. Scholastica.

Confession and Spiritual Direction

Priests are available for the sacrament of reconciliation, and spiritual directors are available for pastoral meetings. Please inquire of Br. Aidan or Lori if you would like to speak with one of the brothers.

Coffee Area

Fresh coffee is available by 6 each morning. You will also find tea and fruit as well as a microwave and refrigerator available for your use.

Volunteering

We are always in need of volunteers to help with dinner dishes. You'll find a volunteer sign-up sheet under the whiteboard near the refectory. If you'd like to volunteer in other ways or at other times, please see Br. Aidan.

Cell Phones

We strongly encourage you to turn off your cell phone for the duration of your stay. There are so few spaces free of electronic distractions these days, and we firmly believe that your retreat experience will be enhanced by turning off your phone. If you do need to use your phone, please do so in the phone room near St. Scholastica or outside. **Under no circumstances bring your phone to the church or the refectory.**

Library

There is a library available for guest use, located on the first floor of the Middle House. Please return all books prior to your departure by dropping them in the basket near the library door.

Elevator

We hope to have a modern, no-threshold elevator in place by 2021. Until then, please be kind to our antique elevator. It can only accommodate one person at a time. Please remember to close the scissor gate on the cab and both close and latch the swinging

wooden gate on each floor before and after using the elevator. It will not move otherwise.

Parking

We ask all guests to park in the upper parking lot. The spaces closer to the Guesthouse are reserved for day guests and staff. Handicap parking is available in the small parking lot near the bookstore.

Smoking

Please keep your smoking confined to the smoking pole located directly across the driveway from the main entrance to the Guesthouse. Smoking is not permitted anywhere else on the grounds.

Grounds

You are warmly encouraged to explore our extensive grounds. We have 26 acres, much of it lovingly landscaped by Br. Aidan and our garden volunteers. Our property extends all the way down to the river, where trails will lead you to stone beaches. You can access these trails by heading downhill on the mown paths (the less steep one is near the treeline). At the treeline at the bottom of the hill you will find the trailheads. Please do exercise caution when walking down the hill, as it can get pretty muddy and slick at wet times of year.

Should you move any of the garden furniture, please move it back where you found it before heading back inside. Please do not weed without explicit permission. You are welcome to take photographs, but please do so from the boundaries of the flower beds. Do not step in the flower beds under any circumstances.

When walking, we ask you to be aware of the signs that read “monastic enclosure.” These signs indicate the boundaries of the brothers’ private space. Please do not enter these areas.

We do have ticks in the Hudson Valley. We provide insect repellent and sunscreen on a table by the entrance to the Guesthouse. If there is none there, please see Lori in the Guesthouse Office. We ask that you refrain from leaving sticks by the Guesthouse door.

Bookstore

The Monk’s Cell Book and Gift Shop is located in the Middle House. There you’ll find Holy Cross incense; books on Christian spirituality, scripture, and theology; t-shirts, cards, and gifts; and—most popularly—chocolate. The bookstore is open Wednesday through Saturday, from 1.30 – 4.30pm and Sunday from 1 – 2pm.

Rooms, Heating, and Cooling

Please treat your room kindly. We ask that you turn off your fan and lights before leaving the room. Set the radiator no higher than 2 in the winter. Please note that, in the colder months, the boiler comes on in the evening and again the early morning. Should you need an extra space heater or electric blanket, please check the linen closet on your floor. If there is not one there, please see Br. Aidan or Lori.

Please do not bring food to your room (coffee, tea, and water are fine). Please do not burn candles or incense.

Wi-Fi

Wi-fi is available on the main floor of the Guesthouse. The network is “HC_Guest” and the password is 2013604400. Please make sure to use headphones if listening to music, audiobooks, or the like. Please do not stream video over the Wi-Fi.

Departure

We ask you to be out of your rooms by 10am the day of your departure. On Sundays, you are welcome to stay in your rooms until 1.30pm. Place your dirty sheets and towels (please, no mattress pads, blankets, or bedspreads) in a pillowcase outside your door.

Please remake your bed and set out fresh towels. You can find sheets, pillowcases, and towels in the linen closet on your floor. Please also close the windows and say a prayer or hold a moment of silence for the next occupant of your room.