

THE POWER OF TRUE HEART

Discerning a priestly vocation is not a matter of learning a craft, but of allowing the grace of God to transform our heart after Christ's own Heart. like St. Ignatius did. Despite their great desires., young men today have difficulty understanding how to do that. In a culture saturated with noise and distraction, it is harder than ever to sift through the competing voices to hear the voice of the Father, and to respond virtuously and courageously.

TRUE HEART adapts the timeless method of St. Ignatius to our own day and time. Using this program, young men and women can encounter the Risen Lord and respond to Him in a profoundly personal way in the Sacraments, prayer, and lives of virtue. Seminarians and those discerning the seminary will find that the TRUE HEART exercises and other material are useful resources in leading them to a deep daily encounter with Jesus. From this place of encounter, they will be better able to hear the Lord's call and respond as Mary did.

**-Very Rev. Daniel J. Barnett – Rector
Bishop White Seminary – Spokane, WA**

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola are one of the great spiritual treasures in the Church. Ignatian spirituality has formed countless saints and holy men and women over the past five centuries. We are indebted to Fr. Bill Watson for making this spiritual treasure accessible to a new generation. It is certain to bear much fruit for many years into the future.

**-Steve Bollman
Founder & President of Paradisus Dei
Author, "That Man Is You" & "The Choice Wine"**

In speaking with university students and listening to their concerns, certain areas always enter into the conversation. "How do I Pray?", "How can I know what God wants me to do?", "How do I learn more about discernment?" These are areas that young adults question constantly because they have a desire to grow in holiness and faith. TRUE HEART is a very approachable program that addresses these issues and more.

I cannot wait to challenge the students and implement TRUE HEART as a semester long program at Rice University. It is set up as a turn-key program that can be led by campus ministers, chaplains or student leaders. It can also be implemented within small group communities of men, women or co-ed. I am excited for our Catholic Students to experience TRUE HEART so they in turn can experience the true love that God has for His children.

**-Rev. Ray Cook, OMI
Director of Campus Ministry – Rice University – Houston, TX**

In TRUE HEART, Fr. Bill Watson has created a truly unique toolkit for youth and young adult formation. I could write countless endorsements about countless aspects of the TRUE HEART program that are noteworthy, and the reader might be led to think, Davidson just wants to praise everything. SO not true. I am very critical of these types of resources, having created many, and utilized many, I know too well the myriad ways they often fall short of what is needed for formation.

TRUE HEART is simply extraordinary. I personally am so excited to have these for use with my Confirmation classes and in many other formation settings. I am grateful I am for Fr. Bill Watson's diligent and extraordinary work. I stand in awe of what Fr. Bill Watson produced—the breadth and depth blow my mind.

For those seeking a program, TRUE HEART provides a detailed, user-friendly, comprehensive curriculum. For those seeking more flexible learning modules and experiences, TRUE HEART gives you an extraordinary toolkit that can be flexibly adapted and seamlessly integrated to supplement other programs, or for use in every kind of retreat or formation experience. I have used knowledge and tools from TRUE HEART with middle school, high school, college, and young adult settings. TRUE HEART not only provides essential knowledge about the faith; it is the perfect balance of deep content and flexible implementation needed to create an authentic and engaging experience of the faith. I cannot recommend it more highly!

-Matt Davidson, Ph.D.

President, Institute for Excellence & Ethics (IEE)

The Sacred Story Institute is at the leading edge of wisdom development in both children and adults. Now the Institute and its founder, Fr. William Watson, have created a very powerful set of programs for youth and young adults called TRUE HEART. These programs--one for individual young adults and one for youth and young adult leaders--help those who use them to remain grounded in real life, discover the beauty of existence at elemental levels, face the challenges young adults face in a high pressure world, and protect their spiritual and emotional development from digital distress. I highly recommend the TRUE HEART programs.

-Michael Gurian

New York Times bestselling author of The Wonder of Boys and The Minds of Girls

In my years of work with high school students in retreat settings and teaching meditation classes, I find that the TRUE HEART resources are comprehensive and foundational for young adults to building stronger, long lasting experiences in the Lord as they seek purposeful direction in their lives as they are called to building the Kingdom of God. The spirituality program Fr. Bill Watson, SJ offers in TRUE HEART: A Way to Selflessness, invites young adults to create, sustain and live

out a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ using the spiritual practices of St. Ignatius Loyola but with a modern twist.

Young adults will encounter the Lord through time proven spiritual methods such as:

- ✘ Unplugging intentionally from technology (distractions) during periods of time daily to remain open to the spiritual sphere of life*
- ✘ Daily prayer periods that are rooted in the Ignatian Examen*
- ✘ Spiritual exercises that point out roadblocks to living freely the spiritual life*
- ✘ Young adults interacting and sharing with other young adult prayer companions*
- ✘ Experiencing night vigils modeled on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises*
- ✘ Engaging with trusted mentors who can guide with wisdom, experience and faith*

This time of communion with God peels away the false self of the young adult, as a companion of Jesus, and feeds their authentic self that leads to spiritual maturation.

-Andrew K. Hoelperl

Theology Department Chair – McQuaid Jesuit – Rochester, NY

True Heart Practices provides a practical Ignatian roadmap that will help young people speak, heart to heart, with our Living God. As Pope Francis continues to remind us that Christ Lives (Christus Vivit), this resource helps the reader practice the art of meditation in a vivid and relatable way.

-Jonathan Lewis

Assistant Secretary for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns

Archdiocese of Washington

The “TRUE HEART’ program offers resources for young adults and their formation leaders that provide simple and practical introductions to Ignatian prayer that will help all who use them to discover the deepest desire of their hearts: ‘selflessness” and a daily living relationship with Jesus Christ.”

-Curtis Martin

Founder & CEO of FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students)

It is not true that young adults are not interested in religion as such. Young adults are not interested in a Christianity which, in their perception, is completely irrelevant to who they are. What if we told them that it is precisely Christ that they need to understand their truest heart? TRUE HEART does this and much more! Fr. Watson's program not only awakens a passionate longing for authenticity, it actually takes you step by step, with the wise pedagogy of St. Ignatius and his sons, away from self-centeredness towards pure, selfless freedom.

My college students often ask, OK, I want to do this "Jesus thing" but what does it really mean in practice? How do you become that person God made you to be? TRUE HEART gives young people a perfect answer to this very question. I am excited for the new opportunities campus ministries around the country receive in Fr. Watson's TRUE HEART, and I wish I had had TRUE HEART 'S wonderful toolkit earlier!

-Fr. Lukasz Misko, OP

***Director, St. Catherine of Siena Newman Center at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT
President/Director, Dominican Liturgical Center Foundation, Krakow, Poland***

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... (Hebrews 1, 1-2a)". This is the core of TRUE HEART that the **Sacred Story Institute** has given us for our work with youth and young adults. TRUE HEART is a real effort to make the Word of God as near as it can be, for the new generations that hunger and thirst of an intimate encounter with their Creator. There are no magical tricks to change our lives, but the daring invitation to make fascinating treks to build a new way with the solid truths of what God has revealed to us in his Son. The TRUE HEART programs never discard the chief cornerstone, but hold fast to it, and give it a new language so it can be better heard and understood by a new generation.*

-Rev. Hermann Rodríguez Osorio, S.J.

Delegate for Mission

Jesuit Provincial's Conference of Latin America (CPAL)

As an educator I am so grateful to have a resource like TRUE HEART. This program will help students balance the connectivity they find through their devices with a deeper connection to what is going on in their hearts. TRUE HEART will help young people discover a loving God who wants to walk alongside of them in the exciting and difficult journey of adolescence. I cannot wait to have my students benefit from this program.

-Jose Oyanguren

Headmaster – St. Augustine Prep – Managua, Nicaragua

I have been privileged to work with Fr. Watson, S.J. for several years during the development of the TRUE HEART program. This life-changing guide is the culmination of years of research and study, both scholarly and with actual teen and young adult groups, in schools and parishes nationwide and in Latin America.

What gives TRUE HEART its depth and breadth is the up-to-date scientific research and day to day experiences associated with adolescents and young adults in the 21st century. TRUE HEART offers

daily periods of reflection tightly woven with Scripture study leading to the desire to reach out to others from the students own awakening and new awareness.

Fr. Bill's profound and graced experiences of Sacred Story and now TRUE HEART for adolescents and young adults connects the modern trend of mindfulness practice with the ancient practice of lectio divina that has engaged my students precisely where they are and humbly sharing with them the gateway to the God of Jesus of Nazareth and the Risen Christ.

TRUE HEART exceeds one's expectations of an "all-in-one" program. It does so simply because the TRUE HEART experience provides the door through which each individual may discover God in themselves—and others—in the present moment. I cannot say the same of any other program I've tried in a thirty-plus year career in Catholic education.

I highly recommend this program for yourself and also to share with youth groups, secondary Theology Classes, school student unions working toward tolerance and equality, Newman Centers and young adult parish programs and other groups of young people searching for God now.

-Marcella M. Nesbitt

Theology Instructor — McQuaid Jesuit — Rochester, NY

TRUE HEART is a dynamic, prayerful, and timely resource for young adults to engage more deeply in a relationship with Jesus Christ. The 10-weeks of intentional prayer, quiet, and spiritual discipline will serve to open their minds and hearts to hear more clearly the ways God is speaking to them and calling them deeper. Fr. Bill says it best in the foreword- if 2% of people answer the call to participate in TRUE HEART, the other 98% will be deeply impacted by the overflow of love and devotion to Christ they develop. I do appreciate the Leader Resource Guide, as well, and would highly recommend this to leaders of young adult groups as they plan days of reflections, retreats, and other programs. Prayer is the most important way to maintain a relationship with God, and TRUE HEART offers a training regimen to instill a habit of prayer and listening to God that will be life-changing for young adults! God bless you in using TRUE HEART,

-Megan Pepin

Director of Young Adult Ministry — Archdiocese of Seattle

TRUE HEART is a brilliant pioneering effort from Fr. Bill Watson. He masterfully plays spiritual matchmaker with our youth and young adults today and invites them into the resplendent vision of St. Ignatius of Loyola's timeless wisdom for human flourishing. Fr. Watson opens the deep beauty of Ignatian practice and mindfully offers us a guided tour on how to apply its powerful relevance as a balance to our modern digital lives. Fr. Watson's work here is a profound

opportunity for youth and young adults to directly encounter the footsteps of Ignatius who leads us to the heart of Jesus Christ.

The youth and young adults we share TRUE HEART with will encounter Christ's grace in personal and transformative ways they never knew were possible. To revisit the steps of Fr. Watson's process from the initial meetings with my students at O'Dea to this final stage is truly awesome.

-Tom Schutte

Theology Educator, O'Dea High School

The TRUE HEART program is a unique opportunity for young people to undergo Spiritual Exercises within their busy everyday life. Fr William skillfully adapts his wonderful Sacred Story methodologies to the needs of busy students. The author of the TRUE HEART program is very aware of the challenges young people face and so places emphasis on topics like the use of technology and the struggle with self-respect. TRUE HEART program helps to understand and deepen the experience of the sacrament of Reconciliation. It provides a great introduction to reading and meditating the Scripture.

The whole program is so constructed that it is accessible for both those who just start an intentional faith life as well as for those who want to deepen their existing relationship with God. I wholeheartedly recommend this program for Youth and Young Adult leadership teams. I also recommend it for young adults wishing to grow in their faith who also want to discern life choices in light of faith. I will use it in my own ministry.

-Fr. Marcin Szymański, OP

Associate Director of Prince of Peace Newman Center at the University of Washington