

See God through the lens of love

As I write this in early August, I'm reflecting on life and retreats.

I just finished a weekend retreat at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg for a group of men from Chambersburg, Pa. This coming weekend, I'll be giving a retreat at St. Joseph's in the Hills in Malvern, Pa. Later this month, I'll be giving a retreat for senior women at the Dominican Retreat House in McLean, Va.

As I (ahem) age, I find these retreats more and more exhausting, but I still love doing them. The weekend is filled with personal prayer time, Eucharists, Benedictions, confessions, personal counseling, spiritual direction and on and on. In these personal hours with the men and women, I hear all the drama of life - the stories of marital love and conflict, stories of troubles with children, personal issues and more. As I listen hour after hour, I'm filled with the drama of life.

Then something very interesting happens. The retreat ends.

Especially at Malvern, I am usually the last person to leave. All the men and all the drama are suddenly gone. The chapel and halls are empty. The carts are filled with their bed linens. The silence