

A Capital Campaign for Revitalization in Ridgefield

To Revitalize † To Pray † To Form † To Inspire

Where Christ Is Still King



Historic Perspective: Early Years of the SSPX in Ridgefield



Nestled on 13 acres on Lake Mamasasco in scenic Ridgefield, CT. (60 miles north of New York City), is one of the priories of the Society of St. Pius X - Christ the King Church, St. Ignatius Retreat House and Padre Pio Academy.

Our mission is to preserve the Catholic Faith in its fullness and purity, to teach its truths and to diffuse its virtues, especially through the Roman Catholic priesthood.

Originally built in 1915 by the Dixon Pencil family, the St. Ignatius Retreat House building served many purposes over the years, as a private home and lake lodge, as an inn through the 40's and 50's and a Jesuit retreat center named 'Manresa' in the 1960's.

Finally purchased by the SSPX in 1978, it became St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary.



Mamasasco Lake Lodge, c. 1940



Seminarians process through Ridgefield



Seminarians sing in Retreat House chapel

Historic Perspective: Early Years of the SSPX in Ridgefield



Architect's rendering for church design

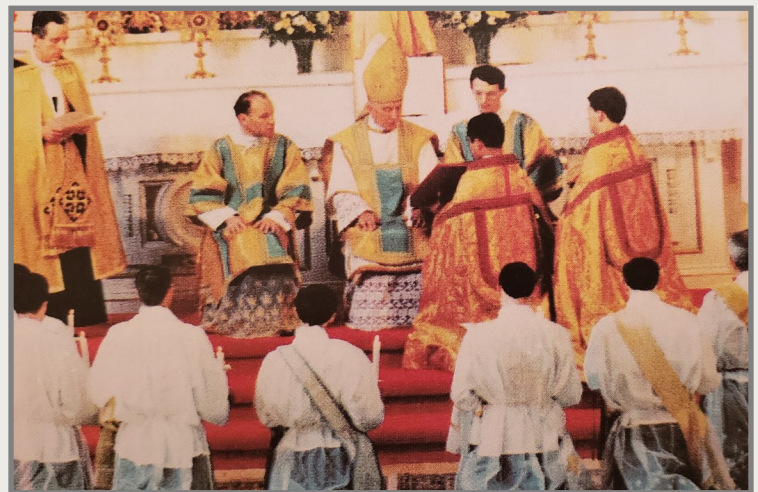
Seminarians and laity worked tirelessly side by side to repair and renovate the worn property and buildings. These buildings then became home to future Society priests between 1978 and 1988. Many of the first American Society priests were trained and ordained in Ridgefield, CT.

Construction of the Church was a long and arduous process, beginning in 1982, when the number of priestly vocations outgrew the small basement chapel. Construction came to a halt when the seminary moved to Minnesota in 1988, and the cavernous building lay vacant and deteriorating for the next 18 years.

As parishioner numbers grew while using the small basement chapel of the Retreat House, so did the need for the Church. Finally, nearly two decades after construction began, Christ the King Church opened its doors for Christmas Midnight Mass in the year 2000.



Building as it stood vacant



Early priestly ordinations in Ridgefield

Maintenance and Inspection

Since acquiring the property, routine maintenance has ensured that the buildings and property were safe and functioned well. However, in 2017 a contractor was brought in to do a thorough inspection and it was discovered that extensive structural renovations were necessary.

This Inspection Revealed Serious Problems

We discovered that there was serious deterioration of the roof, gutters, windows and stucco and a serious water infiltration problem in the basement. The Retreat House, the church, the Academy, St. Joseph's House and the grounds - our entire campus - all were in need of extensive and immediate repair.

Due to the urgency of necessary repairs, a loan was secured to complete much of the work on Christ the King Church, with more still to do.

To repay the loan and continue our work we need to raise \$3.5 Million.



Damaged roof



Damage to transept area



Damage to East side

Why These Buildings Are Integral to Our Work

The buildings and campus are an integral part of the history of the Society in the U.S. and the center of our spiritual work. For many years, Ridgefield was the only priory serving all the SSPX missions in the entire Northeast. Many of the first American Society priests were trained and ordained in Ridgefield, CT and now work in our priories all over the world, administering the sacraments, guiding souls and assisting in SSPX schools.

Through the past 40 years, thousands of priests, seminarians, laity and students have passed through our halls, attending the Seminary, Mass, retreats and classes at The Academy. Through God's grace and the enthusiasm and generosity of our friends and the faithful, thousands more will pass through in the future.

At Christ the King Church we strive to live, teach and integrate our Catholic Faith into all that we do. We firmly believe that the Faith promotes temporal order, justice, culture and peace because it alone is the narrow path to eternal life.

The beauty and richness of our work comes together in one location here in Ridgefield, providing our priests, congregation, students and visitors an opportunity to partake and participate in many aspects of our mission, to grow both spiritually and personally through the expression and practice of their faith.

Our home in Ridgefield consists of St. Ignatius Retreat House, Padre Pio Academy, Christ the King Church, St Joseph's House and 13 acres of beautiful property. Our mission is spiritual and these buildings and grounds are a crucial means to that end. To lose them to deterioration and decay would have a significant effect on our ability to continue as we have for over forty years.

**These buildings are:
Where we revitalize
Where we pray
Where we form young minds
Where we inspire others**



Lenten Mass at Christ the King Church, Ridgefield, CT

TO REVITALIZE: St. Ignatius Retreat House

St. Ignatius Retreat House became the principal Retreat House for the District of the United States when St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary moved to Minnesota in 1988. The Retreat House specializes in one-week Spiritual Exercises according to the method of St. Ignatius of Loyola, a method dictated to him directly by the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Exercises were considered a very important apostolate of the SSPX by founder Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

Retreats are offered separately for men and women throughout the year and offer periods of quiet peace, prayer and reflection which are vital for a profound Catholic life. Our waterfront location is ideal for a secluded, peaceful and profitable retreat.



Thousands of priests, seminarians, laity and students have attended retreats and passed through our halls. St. Ignatius Retreat House has served retreatants not only from the Northeast but from nearly every state in the U.S. and from around the world. Many are those, especially in these times of turmoil, who have richly benefited from the silence and recollection afforded by this beautiful property to rediscover the beauties of the Catholic faith and to reestablish a strong spiritual life.

The Retreat House is home to 7 priests and 3 brothers. The priests who reside here minister to eight chapels in the Northeast offering Mass, preaching recollections and parish missions, visiting the sick, teaching catechism and tending to the faithful and school children. In addition to Christ the King, priests from Ridgefield travel each week to St. Lawrence in South Windsor, CT (Hartford); St. Michael in Farmingville, Long Island, NY; St. Christopher's Mission in Manhattan, NY; St. Anthony of Padua in North Caldwell, NJ; St. Jude's in Eddystone, PA; St. Catherine's in Boston, MA and Immaculate Conception in Gilford, NH.



TO PRAY: Christ the King Church

The Church is the cornerstone of our campus. Construction started in 1982 and then was abandoned in 1988 when the seminary moved to Winona, MN. The building stood vacant and deteriorating for 18 years before being completed in the year 2000. Now Masses are held each Sunday, holy days and holidays for a grateful congregation and on weekdays for The Academy students and parishioners.

TO FORM: Padre Pio Academy

True Catholic education is now more vital than ever, considering today's widespread loss of faith and morality. The schools of the Society of St. Pius X are committed to providing children with a safe, healthy environment in which they can learn and grow into the strong Catholic leaders of tomorrow.

Padre Pio Academy is the parish school of Christ the King Church and offers a private, traditional Catholic school for grades K through 8. The curriculum for kindergarten through eighth grade includes: Religion, Language Arts (learning to read and write, English grammar, literature and composition), Latin, History, Geography, Mathematics, Nature Study and Science, Music, Art and Physical Education. All students are encouraged to develop a profound spiritual life in union with the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.



TO INSPIRE: St. Joseph's House

It has always been a hope of ours to have a convent for teaching nuns to enrich our spiritual activities here in Ridgefield. We are readying the way for this hope to become a reality within a few years, by completing the necessary renovations to St Joseph's House.

Once a former stable and carriage house, the building is now also in need of structural repairs and major rehabilitation. Our convent plans include restoration of the lofted ceilings and creating ample living quarters, a library and oratory. Bringing the Sisters here to teach will enhance all we do, providing stability and a critical foundation for the religious spirit of our school and parish. Until that time, the renovated St. Joseph's House will be home to our Academy teachers.



Our Plan for the Future

Four decades from its noble beginnings as home to the ordinations of the first U.S. seminarians, St. Ignatius Retreat House, Christ the King Church, Padre Pio Academy and St. Joseph's House remain a vital hub of Society activity here in the U.S. With over a century of use for the Retreat House, and Christ the King Church which stood vacant and deteriorating for so many years prior to its completion, the property and buildings require extensive structural repairs and renovations.

The Total Cost of the Revitalization is Estimated at \$3.5 Million

Retreat House: \$900,000

Anyone who has made a recent retreat at St. Ignatius is well acquainted with the 59 drafty windows and their increasingly dilapidated inadequacy. Major structural and exterior work includes window and gutter replacement, repair to the stucco facade, masonry and chimney repairs, roofing, and replacement of the walkway on the south side. The cupola housing the priory bell (a blessed sacramental) is also in need of repairs.

Interiorly, the chapel requires ceiling and air conditioning replacement, while the house requires bathroom renovations and painting throughout. Upgraded technology is also required, including installation of a new house bell system and phone system.



Example of extensive stucco damage



Damage to wood trim throughout exterior



The many chimneys must be capped and tuck pointed

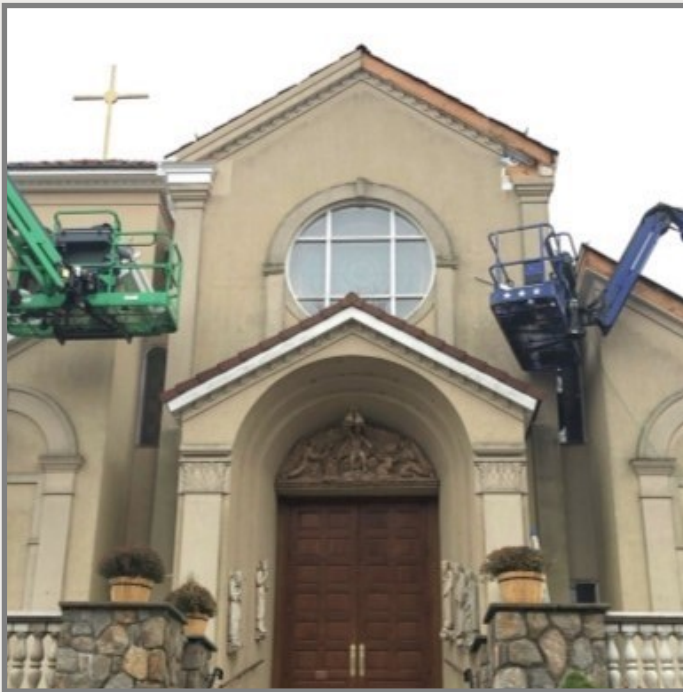


Retreat House bell tower in need of repair

Church and Padre Pio Academy: \$1.9 Million

The full building assessment revealed the need for urgent and extensive rehabilitation. With the help of a loan from the U.S. District, we were able to start the work immediately to save our church and school. The repairs were so urgently needed that much of the work could not wait and the following has already been completed: Major structural repairs including the replacement of virtually every window of the Church and rebuilding the surrounding structure of each due to extensive deterioration.

This deterioration caused water infiltration behind the faux stucco in many areas, the transept and cupola windows being the most problematic. Roof tiles in many areas required full replacement, along with the trim and gutters which were not adequate for the task. Rot-proof composite material was used, and the gutters and downspouts were upgraded based on engineering design calculations.



Choir loft window and façade repair



Extensive façade repair



Total gutting and reconstruction of Academy

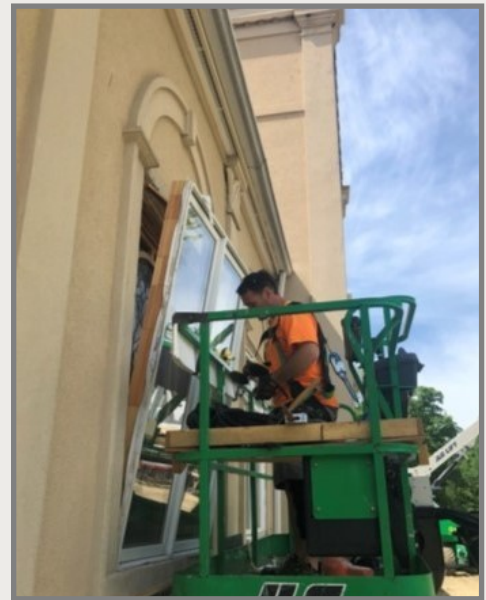
Church and Padre Pio Academy: \$1.9 Million

Due to the extensive water infiltration, a significant related mold problem was discovered on the lower level and in the school, thus commanding a complete gutting and restoration of the school. Also included in this remedy were external stucco repairs and painting, new foundation drains and downspouts, extensive regrading, a revised storm sewer system, retaining walls, new balusters, a sidewalk with railings, improved entrance areas, exterior lighting and restoration of landscaping.

Additional renovations include repair of the bell tower, new steps on the front and side entrances and air conditioning for the church and school to help control humidity and prevent new mold contamination.



Drainage installation and grading



Window replacement



New oil tanks and pad

St. Joseph's House: \$500,000 Grounds and Property: \$200,000

St. Joseph's House needs complete renovation to transform it into a fit home for The Sisters who will come to Ridgefield to teach at Padre Pio Academy and for our current teachers. Exteriously, the building needs a water infiltration prevention system, foundation remediation, repairs to the chimney and stucco, a new roof, windows and doors. Interiorly, the building will be redesigned to restore the lofted ceilings, creating ample living quarters, a library and oratory.

The Grounds and Property: Here, amidst the grading, drainage and masonry work around the church, the grounds need well and pump repair and tank removal and replacement. Driveway paving and the installation of proper lighting will ensure that parishioners, retreatants and guests may easily and safely traverse our property. We also hope to remodel the boathouse for practical storage and usage, reconstruct the entire "Old Garden Area" and build a playground for the children.



Roof, chimney and façade repairs needed on St. Joseph's



New sidewalks and stonework



Reconstruction of retaining wall and stonework

A Call to the Faithful for Generous Giving

Nearly a half a century ago fervent faithful brought the Society of St. Pius X and Christ the King Church to life in Ridgefield, CT where it has grown and prospered.

† † † † †

Now it is the task of the current generation of faithful, as heirs and beneficiaries, to be dutiful stewards ensuring that St. Ignatius Retreat House, Christ the King Church, Padre Pio Academy and St. Joseph's House will stand the test of time, preserving the great legacy of the SSPX in Ridgefield, CT.

Pledge Your Gift Today to Support the Capital Campaign to Raise \$3.5 Million for Revitalization in Ridgefield

In Honor of St. Joseph

Our Capital Campaign is specially dedicated to St. Joseph, and we are calling upon you for support with your generous and thoughtful pledge. May we in his honor, and for the glory of God, make our generous pledge to the Capital Campaign for Revitalization in Ridgefield.

Pledges May Be Paid Now or Spread Over 3 Years † Pledge Your Support in One of the Following Ways:

- † Place your completed Campaign Pledge Form in marked envelope in the secure pledge box at the statue of St. Joseph at Christ the King Church
- † Place your completed Campaign Pledge Form in marked envelope in the weekly collection basket
- † Mail completed Campaign Pledge Form in marked Envelope to: Ridgefield Campaign, 209 Tackora Trail, Ridgefield, CT 06877
- † Donate online. Go to www.sspxridgefield.com to make your pledge and contribution

Pledge form enclosed or online at www.sspxridgefield.com

St. Joseph, Model of All Who Labor and Mainstay of Family Life, Pray for Us.

Ridgefield Legacy Stories

~ Fr. Paul Kimball ~ The Ridgefield Seminary and the Cardboard Cathedral ~

In the 1960's, long before the Society of St. Pius X knew Ridgefield, CT, my father, William J. Kimball, worked as an architect for Fletcher Thompson on the Manresa Retreat House in Ridgefield to design its new wing. In 1979 the Society purchased this same property to build the Seminary in Ridgefield and our family drove an hour and forty-five minutes each way to attend Mass in the basement chapel.

A few years after the Seminary was established Fr. Sandborn consulted with my father about building a church. My father estimated that the building would cost a million dollars, even at that time. In later years he was asked to design the main entry way and porch for what is now Christ the King Church.

In 1983, while on vacation from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, my roommate and I knelt in the basement chapel when Archbishop Lefebvre soon afterwards knelt in the pew in front of us. I asked my Novus Ordo roommate if he knew who he was. As he did not, I said, "That is the most important man in the world." He immediately understood.

That same year I entered the seminary in Ridgefield. The "cardboard cathedral," as we seminarians kiddingly called the unfinished church, housed some of the first U.S. Society ordinations. I was privileged to play the trumpet for the annual "Trumpet Voluntary" recessional. The Archbishop commented that he liked brass for the big occasions.

The seminary moved to Winona in 1988, where I was ordained. The "cardboard cathedral," back in Ridgefield was still unfinished and was cleaned up to hold my first Mass. I remember years earlier that I helped to paint the marbled wooden altar along with a seminarian who, while he was carefully painting its back section said, "This part only God will see." Before my first Mass, I prayed that the church could somehow be finished. The roof was put on with borrowed money from Switzerland and the temporary exterior used to enclose the church back in 1984 was badly weathered. What a joy it was years later to see a real marble altar, stained glass windows etc. in Christ the King Church. It seemed like a minor miracle that it should finally be built, having been vacant for so many years. Early Society years knew many struggles. The wind blew, but the building stood. The structure is a microcosm of the Church, symbolic of the struggles and triumph of the universal Church.

It was on that property in Ridgefield where I made my first retreat to decide my life. I brought with me to the retreat a frisbee, a hacksack, a swimsuit and juggling balls. As we drove to Ridgefield my mother told me that the retreat would be in silence. I looked so shocked that she asked me whether I wanted to turn around. I replied, "No, Mom. I can handle it."

It was in Ridgefield that we seminarians often saw the Archbishop to our great joy. It was from him that I received my minor orders, and my confirmation back in 1976. Seminary life in Ridgefield was a little heaven. We seminarians used to crowd around the solarium wood stove to keep warm, as Lake Mamanasco typically froze before the heating system was turned on each winter. It was indeed a humble but tightly knit family. As our holy founder wrote, a good seminary life will be a source of strength and support for the priest for the rest of his life. Ridgefield has certainly produced "Priests for Tomorrow."

Fr. Paul Kimball was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1964 and moved to Higganum, Connecticut in 1976. He was ordained in the first ordinations at Winona in 1989. He was assigned as chaplain to St. Mary's College, teaching theology and philosophy. In 1996 he became the chaplain to the Sisters of the Society of St. Pius X at Sacred Heart Novitiate in Browerville, Minnesota. In 2006 he was the prior at the Asian District House in Singapore. In 2009 he became prior of St. Saviour's Retreat House in Bristol, England. In 2013 he taught in St. John the Baptist School in Roodepoort, South Africa, traveling often to Cape Town, Lesotho, and Namibia. Currently he is assigned to St. Joseph's Priory in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Share Your Ridgefield Legacy Story:

Join others and share the meaningful impact SSPX Ridgefield has had on your life.

Send your story to ridgefield.campaign@gmail.com

Ridgefield Legacy Stories

~ Fr. John Jenkins ~

As a young man still inflamed with the zeal of the Ignatian Retreat so many years ago, the voice of Father prior to me was more than just the daily assignment: "Go help with the building" -- it was symbolic of my future vocation. The building was Christ the King Church, at that time was still incomplete. Much needed to be done. The pillars beneath the altar had to be strengthened to support the weight of the immense marble structure upon it, the entire floor resurfaced, the roof and siding replaced. We had to make the building suitable for the great Guest Who would soon dwell therein, and what an enormous and yet joyous work in which to take part.

The construction of Christ the King Church was perhaps the place where I understand best the vocation of the priest: to build up the Kingdom of Heaven. The house of God is as it were heaven on earth, for it houses the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The priest's vocation is to bring grace to souls, making them Temples of the Holy Ghost. Yet the physical manifestation of this vocation is often as simple as constructing a place where the Holy Sacrifice can be offered. An earthly father begins his vocation by building a home for his family - and so also a young man will learn what it means to be a spiritual father in providing a home for His Lord and his future spiritual children. Many young men have passed through Ridgefield to learn this practical reality. I hope and pray that the faithful in Ridgefield have the generosity to preserve that which they have been given, so that it can be transmitted to others!

"Fr. John Jenkins worked as a lay oblate in Ridgefield for two years before entering the seminary in Winona. After his ordination he has spent his priesthood in the missions of Eastern Europe and Africa where he has established many mission centers and several priories".

~ Fr. Michael McMahon ~

"*The Retreat House.*" How often these words echoed through the McMahon home! Preceded of course by: "*The Seminary!*" This wonderful place of faith and grace played a central role in our young lives with such a lasting impact that the good God alone can measure. In 1973 my dear parents recognized the towering figure of Archbishop Lefebvre and began to support his newly born work in Switzerland. The excitement was palpable when we learned that the SSPX seminary would come to Connecticut in 1978. Not ones to be hearers only but doers as well, my parents dutifully led us to 209 Tackora Trail before a single seminarian, cleaning and preparing for their much-anticipated arrival. Once they settled in, my mother Alice made the hour drive every Friday and Saturday to prepare the main meal for priests and students for the next 4 four years. My teenage years were filled with that same hour trip from West Haven, CT to Ridgefield for Solemn Masses, processions and of course ordinations!

The loss of the seminary to Winona was surely a trial to bear, yet the sacrifice would be amply rewarded by the arrival of the retreat house. . . *grace for grace.* Here during my final year of studies at Yale University in March 1989, I would once again make that hour trek in time, but an experience fit for eternity. Those precious five days following the retreat of Saint Ignatius profoundly changed me from one who desired to climb the worldly ladder of honors and power, to a faithful follower serving under the standard of Christ the King! Thanks to the prayers of my mother, the Rosary of the heavenly Queen and those Exercises of Ignatius, I eventually found myself bound for the seminary where six years later in 1996 I would be ordained a priest for eternity! What a thrill to return to the Retreat House just a week later on the Feast of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, to celebrate for faithful and friends my 1st Solemn High Mass, there where it all started.

Full circle we come, and now 23 years later with 18 years teaching the Faith to young men, the last 13 as Headmaster of our boarding school, La Salette Academy, June 2019 brought me back to the seminary, now twice removed from its Ridgefield, CT location, as assistant priest at the sacerdotal ordination of my 15th student. Some of these students now run schools themselves, including my own successor at La Salette Academy. Profoundly we must thank Our Lord, the Master of the harvest, as well as all friends and benefactors who have made and continue to make this place of faith and grace on Tackora Trail a reality. *Ad multos annos!*

Share Your Ridgefield Legacy Story:

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Send your story to ridgefield.campaign@gmail.com



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SSPX  Ridgefield

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