

San Damiano PROFILES

FR. RAYMOND BUCHER, OFM, DIRECTOR

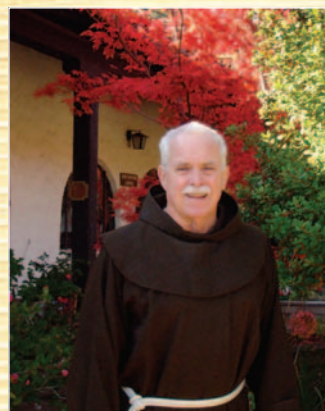
The third of four boys and an Oakland native, Fr. Ray Bucher is certainly a Franciscan. He was born and raised in a very active Franciscan parish (St. Elizabeth's in Oakland), three of his uncles were Franciscan priests, and friars often enjoyed hospitality in his boyhood home.

Indeed, San Damiano is the latest stage in a Franciscan journey for Fr. Ray. After attending St. Anthony's Seminary in Santa Barbara from 1952-1956, he continued his studies at San Luis Rey College in Oceanside. Following a year's hiatus in 1959 for his Novitiate and subsequent profession of simple vows (he recently celebrated his Golden Jubilee!), he received his BA degree in Philosophy from San Luis Rey College in 1961. Fr. Ray was ordained on December 19, 1964, and after spending a pastoral year in Stockton, he resumed his studies in Philosophy at Fordham University in New York, receiving his MA in 1968 and PhD in 1970.

He has served as a Guardian at the Franciscan Headquarters in Rome, as Vicar Provincial for the St. Barbara Province, as a Professor at Santa Clara University and Loyola of New Orleans, and he is a published author - perhaps most notably in Macmillan's Encyclopedia of Religion for "Francis of Assisi." In 1976, he was a fellow at the University of Kansas through an NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) award.

Prior to coming to San Damiano, he was the Director of the Franciscan Renewal Retreat Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. He has been Director of the San Damiano Retreat Center since 1996, and he notes that his fourteen years at San Damiano have been both challenging and rewarding - "...my time here has helped fulfill my Franciscan vocation. It has helped people come to know God's love and His mercy."

Fr. Ray enjoys hiking, film, music, theater, the sun and beach, to note just some of his numerous interests. Few of these, however, can compete with his beloved Raiders and A's (perhaps more than anything, this ongoing support vividly demonstrates his eternally optimistic nature, one he brings to the present campaign). He's grateful to his family, friars, and friends, who, by their lives, have motivated him to celebrate God's goodness.



San Damiano PROFILES

RODGER POWERS

San Damiano has been an integral part of Rodger Powers' life for a quarter-century. His exposure to San Damiano occurred when he attended a Men's retreat here, and this relationship has grown exponentially since.

In addition to being a member of the retreat center's Advisory Board, Rodger is serving as Chairman of the "Sharing God's Goodness... Touching Lives" campaign Leadership Committee - "I pray that our campaign will sustain San Damiano Retreat Center for all those who search for God's peace and love, now and in the future."

Educated by the Jesuits - Rodger received his undergraduate degree from Santa Clara and attended USF for graduate school - Rodger and his wife Sally are long-time members of St. Joan of Arc parish in San Ramon. They have been extremely active in both St. Joan's and the greater community, and three years ago Rodger became a Secular Franciscan. For the Powers, involvement with San Damiano is a shared commitment - Sally serves on the Leadership Committee and also works with the Retreat Center in various fund raising endeavors.

"It has taken quite a bit of formation from a number of different but important areas that have helped me understand the importance of Retreat Ministry. My ecumenical experience early on, when Sally and I moved to northern California, was extremely important in opening my eyes to the importance of inclusiveness in my faith. I have found that charism in the Franciscan community, and it is played out daily at San Damiano."



About Us

Our Mission & This Campaign

The mission of San Damiano Retreat is to provide a peaceful environment of natural beauty where spiritual renewal and growth may be sought by people of all faiths and backgrounds. In the spirit of St. Francis and guided by the Franciscan traditions of joy, hospitality, compassion, peace, and simplicity, we offer contemporary and challenging retreats and programs in response to the changing needs of God's people.

"Sharing God's Goodness... Touching Lives" is the name of this appeal, and it seems to perfectly capture the essence of the retreat center's mission as well as our goals in this endeavor. The serenity and beauty of this very special place must be preserved - by undertaking this campaign to do so, we are able to share in and feel God's goodness while simultaneously enhancing the lives of others.

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TOUCHING LIVES
Sharing God's Goodness...

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SAN DAMIANO RETREAT

Spiritual renewal and growth since 1960

Sharing
God's Goodness...

TOUCHING LIVES



The Lord give you Peace.

As you are likely aware from previous editions of our regular newsletter, the "Sharing God's Goodness... Touching Lives" campaign is underway!

My fourteen years as Director of the San Damiano Retreat Center have been filled with numerous and varied challenges, such as:

- no water for 3 days - with a full house...
- no hot water for 9 Jesuit Provincials...
- last minute cancellation by a popular presenter...
- keeping the programs relevant...

I must say, however, that the challenge of this campaign is unique. It's been quite a (two-year) journey just to get to this stage - an initial needs assessment, a Feasibility Study, planning and organizational activities - all of which occurred before formally initiating the appeal! Of course, each of the preceding was complemented by a tremendous amount of study and prayer.

My apprehension concerning this endeavor was compounded by the fact that San Damiano has not previously undertaken a fund-raising effort of this magnitude. While there have been a variety of appeals, these have primarily included special events and annual requests for donations. I am very pleased to say that my angst has been virtually eliminated, however, by the tremendous support - financial and otherwise - that we have received from nearly everyone with whom we have discussed our needs.

We are very excited about what has taken place in the campaign thus far, and we hope you will be, too. In this special *campaign* edition of our newsletter, you will find information on the critical needs the campaign will address, names of the individuals serving in various leadership roles here at San Damiano, an update on the current status of "Sharing God's Goodness... Touching Lives," and related items.

Since its establishment in 1961, San Damiano Retreat Center has been a sacred place where people come to meditate, reflect, and grow spiritually, all in a Franciscan Key. It has been my pleasure to be a part of San Damiano and witness the wonders that occur here every day. Success in "Sharing God's Goodness... Touching Lives" is critical if we are to continue satisfying the needs of all those needing and desiring to fulfill their spiritual hunger here.

We will realize success in this endeavor only through the generosity of all our retreatants and friends. Accordingly, I hope I can count on all of you, as friends and supporters of San Damiano Retreat Center, to join us in this commitment to renewal!

Paz y Bien

Fr. Ray Bucher OFM

Plan to join us for
the Fall Auction
and Dinner!
Sunday, Oct. 24.
Call for
more information.
925-837-9141.



Sharing God's Goodness...

TOUCHING LIVES

The Campaign has been underway for just a couple of months as of the date of this writing (August 15). Thus far, we have reached out to our Advisory Board, Leadership Committee members, and select other individuals, and we are very encouraged by the support realized thus far - over \$400,000 in cash and pledges has been raised!

Among the gifts received are a couple of very significant commitments from friends of the retreat center. In addition, a pace-setting gift from the **Valley Foundation**, a long-time supporter of San Damiano, helped set the stage for the appeal. We are also very proud and pleased to say that the campaign has received endorsements from the **Most Rev. Salvatore Cordileone, Bishop of the Diocese of Oakland** and the **Very Rev. John Hardin, OFM, Provincial Minister of the St. Barbara Province** (of which San Damiano is a part).

We are giving all who have enjoyed the beauty and serenity of San Damiano – retreatants, friends, etc. – the opportunity to participate in this very special appeal. Members of area churches, Secular Franciscans, Knights of Columbus groups, and foundations are also being invited to support this endeavor.

In addition, we have a broader goal – to increase awareness, interest, and support of San Damiano throughout the greater community. A constant theme is that we have a wonderful story to tell, but that not enough people are aware of us...so we're trying to change that! In many cases, doing so will be a long-term process, but we are pleased to say that it has begun.



PROFILES OF MAJOR SUPPORTERS

Kerry Murphy's relationship with San Damiano began when it opened in 1961. His father, William J. Murphy, had been going to San Juan Bautista but began visiting San Damiano due to its proximity to their home. As he grew, his relationship with San Damiano continued to deepen, and the retreat center is an integral part of his life to this day.

Kerry feels the Retreat Center is such a special place because "...it's an aesthetically beautiful setting, as well as the Order of Franciscans and the men who have been there." In his view, Fr. Ray, as a man of "...compassion and intelligence, who conveys grace and wisdom," exemplifies this.

The next time you visit San Damiano, take a closer look at the statue of St. Francis that welcomes you - it is dedicated to the memory of Kerry's father - and the back deck is dedicated in honor of his mother, Scotty. Indeed, the Murphy family's relationship with San Damiano is so deep that Scotty's funeral service was held at the retreat center.

In addition to his gift to "Sharing God's Goodness...Touching Lives," Kerry has also included San Damiano in his estate. Such frequent and ongoing generosity leads one to feel that although Kerry states, "They have given much to my family"...one might say the reverse is also true.

When she's at San Damiano - whether it is for a retreat, her weekly hikes there, or for another reason - **Mary Diehl** feels like she's "...at home." She's been coming to San Damiano for over 30 years, her involvement beginning when her husband volunteered here.

She attends the week-long Silent Retreat, New Year's Retreat, and Easter Retreat annually, as well as others less regularly. A Cherokee Indian, Mary lives by the Cherokee traditions of the seven spiritual laws of nature. Their close alignment with Franciscan beliefs is a major reason for Mary's deep affinity for San Damiano – and she holds a special appreciation for San Damiano's beauty and peacefulness.

Perhaps most significantly, Mary admires the Franciscans for their commitment to decency – "They just do things. They don't talk about it, they just do it. The Franciscans are a model for people to look at and follow."

Sustainability & Renewal

"Sharing God's Goodness...Touching Lives" is our commitment to sustainability and renewal! Since 1961, San Damiano has appealed to those who yearn for a greater connection to God, and that appeal is perhaps more compelling than ever.

Our facilities are vital elements to our retreats and programs, and they are an ideal complement to our spectacular natural surroundings. As a result of the popularity of our offerings, serenity of our grounds, and our accessibility, our buildings and grounds are in constant use. Due to this tremendous usage, as well as age, the facilities need help.

THE FOLLOWING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RETREAT CENTER ARE PROPOSED:

1. New HVAC system	\$1,200,000
2. Repair/repave circumference roads and parking lots	\$120,000
3. Replace clay roofing tiles on all buildings where needed	\$61,000
4. Refurbish facility exterior, trim, overhangs, gutters/downspouts	\$66,000
5. Paint the main Chapel	\$6,500
6. Renovate the Dining Room — carpeting, chairs, paint	\$22,250
7. Upgrade the lobby — flooring, lighting	\$8,500
8. Establish a general endowment fund	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$1,584,250

The rehabilitation of our facilities is key to the retreat center's sustainability, and it is also essential if we are to continue optimally supporting the growth, reflection, and spiritual renewal that are our essence. Correspondingly, some of the related goals of this appeal include:

- . Enhancing our warm and inviting environment, ensuring that it can continue to effectively satisfy the needs and expectations of our retreatants, friends, and supporters.
- . Renovating our buildings and grounds to reflect a place that actively welcomes all people and supports the sense of individual growth, reflection, and renewal available here.
- . Continuing to provide quality, relevant speakers and presentations so that retreatants may address the challenges that they meet in everyday life, especially in a Franciscan context.
- . Making sure we, unlike many other Retreat Centers, continue to exist – and even thrive.

Over \$260,000 in donations and grants has been provided as we initiate this appeal, and we can also commit up to \$200,000 from our savings (doing so will not adversely influence our ability to conduct day-to-day operations). As a result, our total need is approximately \$1.1 million. While the goal of "Sharing God's Goodness...Touching Lives" is \$900,000, we will strive to raise as much as possible of our overall need.

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

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