



# Memo

**Date:** March 15, 2021

**To:** Priests

**From:** The Most Rev. Bernard E. Shlesinger III, Auxiliary Bishop of Atlanta

**Re:** Purification Heritage Center clergy invitation

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When I served in the military, there was a special program called MWR, Moral, Welfare and Recreation, which was a network of support and leisure services designed for use by US Service Members. This program helped to ensure that soldiers would not suffer combat fatigue and give them ample time to replenish their energy for future engagement.

In the same way, the Archdiocese of Atlanta wants to support priests in the areas of health, morale and welfare. Towards that end, a special opportunity is being offered for all priests within the Archdiocese of Atlanta through Purification Heritage Center (PHC), located in Sharon, Georgia.

For those of you who are not familiar with PHC, it encompasses the church of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the third church structure of the oldest Catholic congregation in the state of Georgia; Locust Grove Cemetery, the oldest Catholic cemetery in the state; and Heritage Preserve, a retreat site that is currently being developed to host future retreats, meetings and pilgrimages on the land where the first Catholics settled in 1790. PHC's vision is to create a sacred place to seek, find and renew faith.

Because of their love for and special connection to the clergy (Purification's feast day Feb 2nd is World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life), PHC would like to invite all clergy who are interested to visit and use the time for rest and reflection in this rural setting. Visits are available for up to five days. While the cabins are not yet completed on the retreat site, priests are invited to stay in the town of Washington, Georgia, in the Fitzpatrick Hotel, just 10 minutes north of PHC. All lodging is complimentary, and priests will receive a welcome basket with snacks and a stipend for meals during their stay. Washington has

a beautiful historic Catholic cemetery named St. Patrick and a near-by revolutionary war battle site called Kettle Creek Battlefield.

You will have the opportunity to say your daily Mass at the church of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the possibility of saying Mass for retreat groups that overlap with your visit. Additional prayer time at the cemetery is available along with the opportunity to pray the Joyful Mysteries in Grace Garden at Heritage Preserve. A series of walking trails around the property enable you to get fresh air and exercise while there.

Just recently, Monsignor Richard Lopez visited for five days. He stayed in Washington, celebrated daily Mass, toured historic sites and took time for rest and reflection. If you would like to contact him about his experience, he would be happy to give more details. He can be reached at [frlopez@spx.org](mailto:frlopez@spx.org). You may also reach out to Amanda Hailey in Ongoing Formation at [ahailey@archatl.com](mailto:ahailey@archatl.com) or (678) 595-9181, if you have any questions. An informational flyer is attached [here](#) for more information.

To make arrangements for a visit, please contact Betsy Orr of PHC at (678) 662-9588 or [betsyorr@me.com](mailto:betsyorr@me.com). Should you decide to visit PHC, I think you will find this to be a wonderful time of quiet, rest and reflection.