

Food for the  
SOUL  
2016 to 2017



The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine



# FOOD FOR THE SOUL 2016–2017

The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine

*All retreats and quiet days at St. John's Convent take place in the milieu of a contemporary monastic community which has a daily rhythm of prayer. All guests are invited to take part in the daily Eucharist, and those staying overnight may like to join us in the Divine Office (Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline).*

## **Quiet Garden Days**

**June 18, July 16, August 6, September 17, 2016**

Inspired by the Quiet Garden Trust in England, these are days to relax, renew, and rest in the beauty of God's outdoors, as well as to enjoy the Sisters' chapel and library. In case of rain, there is plenty of space indoors to wander, sit, dream, and pray. We begin with a brief time of prayer; then a Sister will offer suggestions on how to use the day. The rest of the morning is yours. The Eucharist is celebrated at noon, followed by dinner, and the afternoon is again free, with a brief gathering at 3:30 pm when you will have the option of sharing the fruits of the day followed by a closing time of prayer. **Begins** 9:30 am with a gathering for coffee; **ends** 4 pm. **Fee** \$20 if you bring a bag lunch. A hot meal is an additional \$15. (Registration deadline: one week prior to event.)

## **Individually Directed Retreat**

**Tuesday–Thursday, September 13–15, 2016**

Our God of love so desires to meet with you in the quiet of your heart. Carve out time to come aside and be still, to let your soul settle into the silence, to be intimately present to yourself and to God. A trained spiritual guide will meet with you twice during the silence and solitude of your retreat to help you listen for the movement of God in your prayer and life journey. Your spiritual

guide can introduce you to ways of prayer and suggest scriptural or other prayer content, and you are welcome to bring your contemplative crafts and journal. We will meet as a group once on our first evening for an introduction to the retreat. **Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Tuesday; **ends** 1:30 pm Thursday. **Fee** \$240; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: September 6, 2016) Limited enrollment.

### **The Inner Voice of Love and Our Response** **Friday–Sunday, September 30–October 2, 2016**

We are often instructed to listen to God’s voice guiding us through our lives. The only trouble is that we seldom hear a “voice” which can be disconcerting. Together, we will listen and hear God’s voice both in Scripture and in the creative ways that God reaches out to us in the here and now. God IS speaking, but you and I must be open to discover how and where to “tune into” God’s wavelength and “hear” the inner voice of love. **Sister Sue Mosteller, csj**, is a Sister of St. Joseph from Toronto. Her fifteen-year teaching career, as well as her forty years in the community of L’Arche Daybreak put her in touch with many, many “unlikely” teachers on the spiritual journey. These include people with disabilities and young people, as well as her spiritual fathers, Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen. Sister Sue is retired and lives in Toronto. **Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Friday; **ends** 1:30 pm Sunday. **Fee** \$240; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: September 23, 2016)

### **Living the Blessings of Here and Now** **Friday–Sunday, Oct. 28–30, 2016**

This is a retreat experience that draws upon the rich imagery and wisdom of scripture, Celtic spirituality, and the Story of the Universe. Using music, ritual, sacred clowning and storytelling, Monica and Hilary will engage participants in an awareness of God’s abiding presence and blessings in the here and now. **Hilary Musgrave**, from Ireland, is a former teacher, principal and religious education advisor who works extensively in the area of sacred clowning, story-telling and facilitation. **Monica Brown** is an internationally acclaimed Christian composer and workshop facilitator. Her music is used throughout the world and is touching

the hearts of many. (See [www.emmausproductions.com](http://www.emmausproductions.com)). **Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Friday; **ends** 1:30 pm Sunday. **Fee** \$250; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: October 21, 2016)

## **A Mosaic of Colours**

**Saturday, November 5, 2016**

Discover your creativity and enjoy the challenge, fun and fellowship of making colour-dyed silk scarves as Christmas gifts for yourself or others. Led by **Sr. Jessica Kennedy, SSJD. Begins** 9:30 am with a gathering for coffee; **ends** 4 pm. **Fee** \$40 if you bring a bag lunch (\$35 for Associates and Oblates). Includes silk fabric and dyes. A hot meal is an additional \$15. (Registration deadline: October 29, 2016)

## **Individually Directed Retreat**

**Friday-Sunday, November 11-13, 2016**

Our God of love so desires to meet with you in the quiet of your heart. Carve out time to come aside and be still, to let your soul settle into the silence, to be intimately present to yourself and to God. A trained spiritual guide will meet with you twice during the silence and solitude of your retreat to help you listen for the movement of God in your prayer and life journey. Your spiritual guide can introduce you to ways of prayer and suggest scriptural or other prayer content, and you are welcome to bring your contemplative crafts and journal. We will meet as a group once on our first evening for an introduction to the retreat. **Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Friday; **ends** 1:30 pm Sunday. **Fee** \$240; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: November 4, 2016) Limited enrollment.

## **Transforming Grief**

**Saturday, November 12, 2016**

During this Quiet Day we will acknowledge the transformational power of grief and the Holy Spirit who is able to 'open' the dark treasures of the grief experience to us. Through prayer with the Shema ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One...") and a practice of Lectio Divina with St. John of the Cross, we will learn how to respond to the guidance of the Holy Spirit from

within our experience of grief. Our day together will offer a balance of time together and time alone. At the end of the day, we will leave with a clear and simple method of practice which will enable us to continue to “mine” the deep spiritual resources latent in the grief experience itself. Led by the **Rev. Max Woolaver**, parish priest at St. Andrew’s, Grimsby, and a graduate of the Shalem program for spiritual directors. He is also a member of Spiritual Directors of Ontario. **Begins** 9:30 am with a gathering for coffee; **ends** 4 pm. **Fee** \$30 (\$25 for Associates and Oblates) if you bring a bag lunch. A hot meal is an additional \$15. (Registration deadline: November 5, 2016)

**Advent Quiet Day: Praying with George Herbert**  
**Saturday, December 3, 2016**

The devotional poetry of George Herbert, seventeenth century priest and poet, expresses heart-deep faithfulness; it also functions as spiritual direction for the pilgrim. Herbert’s spiritual journey was long, convoluted and complicated as we learn from his poetry. Therein lies its beauty and value for all his readers. Through a gentle reading of some of his poetry we’ll explore what he has to say about the season of Advent: a time of expectation and examination in preparation for the birth of our Saviour. Led by the **Rev. Canon Susan Bell**, the Canon Missioner for the Diocese of Toronto. In this role, she works as a catalyst for and encourager of mission throughout the Diocese. Susan is Associate Priest at St. Martin in the Fields, Toronto, and Chaplain of Havergal College. **Begins** 9:30 am with a gathering for coffee; **ends** 4 pm. **Fee** \$30 (\$25 for Associates and Oblates) if you bring a bag lunch. A hot meal is an additional \$15. (Registration deadline: November 26, 2016)

**Christmas Retreat: Christmas in Popular Song**  
**Friday–Monday, Dec 23–26, 2016**

Songwriters of popular music try to capture the meaning, joys, and sorrows of Christmas. Some songs are widely known, whereas others would only be familiar if you knew the singer/songwriter. In any case, you would not hear them sung in a church service. As part of the Christmas season, we will listen to some of

these songs and discuss what the writer is trying to express, and we will have the opportunity to reflect on our personal experiences. Led by **Craig Gustafson**, a member of Grace, Scarborough, and Parish Administrator at St. George on Yonge. **Arrivals and registration** 2 - 4 pm Friday; **ends** after breakfast Monday. **Special holiday rate** of \$250 for this three-day retreat; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: December 16, 2016)

### **New Year's Retreat**

**Saturday–Sunday, Dec 31, 2016 – Jan 1, 2017**

Sisters of SSJD will lead participants in reflecting on the year past and envisioning the new year. Time for personal reflection and group discussion. Consider spending 28 hours (or more if you wish) at the Convent, celebrating the New Year in an environment of peace and quiet fellowship. Enjoy a candlelight labyrinth walk (weather permitting), festive food, and a new creative way of beginning your year. **Arrivals and registration** 9 – 10 am Saturday; **ends** 1:30 pm Sunday. **Fee** \$120; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: December 23, 2016)

### **The Spirituality of Islam**

**Saturday, January 21, 2017**

We will learn about the growth of the mystical tradition in Islam, the rise of asceticism, and the lives of prominent Sufi figures such as Rabi'a, Hallaj, Rumi, and Ghazali. The day will end with a discussion on how Islamic mysticism can act as a link between East and West. Led by **Professor Liyakat Takim**, the Sharjah Chair in Global Islam at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada. A native of Zanzibar, Tanzania, he has spoken at more than eighty academic conferences and authored one hundred scholarly works on Islam and inter-religious dialogue. He teaches a wide range of courses on Islam and offers a course on comparative religions. **Begins** 9:30 am with a gathering for coffee; **ends** 4 pm. **Fee** \$30 (\$25 for Associates and Oblates) if you bring a bag lunch. A hot meal is an additional \$15. (Registration deadline: January 14, 2017)

## Visualizing the Psalms

**Friday–Sunday, February 10–12, 2017**

The psalmist digs deep into the human soul in forms of praise, entreaty, anger and fear. The psalms reveal what might be called a personal blog to the divine in today's culture. Depths of pain and praise are plumbed by a myriad of voices. Spend a weekend visualizing through paint and paper, cutouts and drawing, your response to the personal voices found in the psalms. Expressive art can deepen our understanding of texts and lead to the place where words alone are incomplete. Led by **Janet Read**, a practicing visual artist, musician and sometime poet. She studied philosophy, English and medieval studies at the University of Toronto. She has a degree in Education and an MA in aesthetic philosophy from the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. More information and images of her work can be found at [www.janet-read.com](http://www.janet-read.com). **Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Friday; **ends** 1:30 pm Sunday. **Fee** \$240 + \$10 for supplies. **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: February 3, 2017)

## **The Presence of God: Finding Peace in a Troubled World** *Lenten Quiet Day for Associates, Oblates and Friends*

**Saturday, February 25, 2017**

With a blend of scripture, story and practice we will explore the Way of Jesus—the way of love, compassion and forgiveness—that illuminates the Presence of God and brings the “Peace which surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). Led by the **Rev. Stephen Kirkegaard**, Rector of Holy Trinity, Guildwood, whose work on meditation has been featured on CBC, WTN & Vision TV. **Begins** 9:30 am with a gathering for coffee; **ends** 4 pm. Fee \$30 (\$25 for Associates and Oblates) if you bring a bag lunch. A hot meal is an additional \$15. (Registration deadline: February 18, 2017.)

## **Compassed About: Gifts for Discernment from the Celtic Tradition**

**Friday–Sunday, March 24–26, 2017**

The words “compassed about” illuminate a prayer for All Saints Day in the Book of Common Prayer which boldly pronounces “who in the multitude of thy Saints hast compassed us about with so great a cloud of witnesses”. Through their prayer, art and music, we’ll explore the “thin places” created by those who have gone before us, some of the Celtic saints whose lives can be for us a “compass”, blessing us with gifts for discernment for our life’s journey. Led by the **Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith**, Rector of St. Alban’s Parish in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and an Oblate of SSJD. **Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Friday; **ends** 1:30 pm Sunday. **Fee** \$240; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: March 18, 2017)

## **Holy Week Retreat: From the Palm Parade to the Empty Tomb**

**Wednesday–Sunday, April 12–16, 2017**

We live in a world where the paradox of the Passion inevitably leaves us “wanting”. How do we make sense of our lives in the light of these events? Come as we journey through the questions. Led by **Sr. Debra Johnston, SSJD** and a Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. **Arrivals and registration** 2 - 4 pm Wednesday; **ends** after dinner Sunday. **Special Holy Week fee** \$360; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: April 5, 2017)

## **Individually Directed Retreat**

**Tuesday–Thursday, April 25–27, 2017**

Our God of love so desires to meet with you in the quiet of your heart. Carve out time to come aside and be still, to let your soul settle into the silence, to be intimately present to yourself and to God. A trained spiritual guide will meet with you twice during the silence and solitude of your retreat to help you listen for the movement of God in your prayer and life journey. Your spiritual guide can introduce you to ways of prayer and suggest scriptural or other prayer content, and you are welcome to bring your

contemplative crafts and journal. We will meet as a group once on our first evening for an introduction to the retreat. **Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Tuesday; **ends** 1:30 pm Thursday. **Fee** \$240; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: April 18, 2017) Limited enrollment.

### **A Day of Celebration and Reflection with St. John Saturday, May 6, 2017**

Come, celebrate, pray and be drawn into the mystery of Jesus through the eyes and heart of St. John the divine, patron saint of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine. We will explore some of the precious jewels of the Gospel of St. John, in John's own words: "...that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). Then join in a Festal Eucharist with the Sisters celebrating St. John's Day followed by a fellowship lunch. Led by **Sr. Doreen, SSJD, Prioress of the Sisterhood. Begins** 9:30 am with a gathering for coffee; **ends** 4 pm. **Fee** \$30 (\$25 for Associates and Oblates) if you bring a bag lunch. A hot meal is an additional \$15. (Registration deadline: April 29, 2017)

### **A World of Wonder: Falling in Love with Creation Again in an Era of Climate Crisis Friday-Sunday, May 26-28, 2017**

We know that the world God created is wonderful, and yet we seem unable to stop its destruction. Is there a Christian response? Yes, to fall in love with creation again because we protect the things we love. We will explore what it is to recover our love for creation, and to realize that being made in the image of God means being in full relationship with the Earth. Led by the **Rev. Dr. Stephen Drakeford**, Rector of the Church of the Epiphany and St. Mark, Parkdale, who also preaches and teaches creation care. He sits on ecumenical and interfaith Eco-Spirituality boards and is the founder of the Green Witness Community on Toronto Island, a small group that prays for the well-being of creation. Even though he is committed to the environment, he is not committed to Birkenstocks and wool socks.

**Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Friday; **ends** 1:30 pm Sunday. **Fee** \$240; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: May 19, 2017)

### **Individually Directed Retreat**

**Friday–Sunday, June 2–4, 2017**

Our God of love so desires to meet with you in the quiet of your heart. Carve out time to come aside and be still, to let your soul settle into the silence, to be intimately present to yourself and to God. A trained spiritual guide will meet with you twice during the silence and solitude of your retreat to help you listen for the movement of God in your prayer and life journey. Your spiritual guide can introduce you to ways of prayer and suggest scriptural or other prayer content, and you are welcome to bring your contemplative crafts and journal. We will meet as a group once on our first evening for an introduction to the retreat. **Arrivals and registration** 2-4 pm Friday; **ends** 1:30 pm Sunday. **Fee** \$240; **deposit** \$50. (Registration deadline: May 26, 2017) Limited enrollment.

### **Quiet Garden Days**

**June 24, July 22, August 12, 2017**

Inspired by the Quiet Garden Trust in England, these are days to relax, renew, and rest in the beauty of God's outdoors, as well as to enjoy the Sisters' chapel and library. In case of rain, there is plenty of space indoors to wander, sit, dream, and pray. We begin with a brief time of prayer; then a Sister will offer suggestions on how to use the day. The rest of the morning is yours. The Eucharist is celebrated at noon, followed by dinner, and the afternoon is again free, with a brief gathering at 3:30 pm when you will have the option of sharing the fruits of the day followed by a closing time of prayer. **Begins** 9:30 am with a gathering for coffee; **ends** 4 pm. **Fee** \$25 if you bring a bag lunch. A hot meal is an additional \$15. (Registration deadline: one week prior to event)

## **Women at a Crossroads** **June 30–July 23, 2017**

*For Women Seeking Direction in Their Lives*

This 3 week program, held each summer, is for women who are intentionally committed to seeking God's guidance in living out their baptismal call – in business or professional careers, in homemaking, in lay careers in the church, in ordained ministry, in life in a religious community, or in the many other ways in which we may serve God.

You may be called to participate in this program if you are interested in:

- sharing in an intentional Christian community
- learning how to live a balanced life of prayer, work, study, rest and recreation
- engaging in classes and discussions about Christian life and vocation
- receiving personal guidance in deepening your prayer life

*There is no fee for room and board, but participants contribute to the life of the Community by sharing in the Sisters' work. A monetary contribution (tax deductible) may be made to the Sisterhood.*

**Application deadline: April 1, 2017**

**For more information e-mail [convent@ssjd.ca](mailto:convent@ssjd.ca)  
or phone 416-226-2201 ext. 301.**

## PREVIEW FOR FALL, 2017

A Day with the King (Elvis for the Kingdom of God (Sr. Doreen)	Saturday, September 30
Slow Church (Sr. Constance Joanna)	Saturday, October 14
Retreat on the Psalms (Joseph Clarkson)	Friday–Sunday, November 3–5
Introduction to Centering Prayer (Elyse Strathy and Johnson Ling)	Saturday, November 18
Associate Advent Quiet Day (Sr. Elizabeth)	Saturday, December 9
Christmas Retreat (SSJD Sisters)	Saturday–Tuesday, Dec. 23–26
New Year’s Retreat (A Sister of SSJD)	Sunday–Monday, Dec. 31–Jan. 1

### ST. JOHN’S CONVENT AND GUEST HOUSE

We are located in a quiet urban area of north Toronto, easily accessible to the Finch subway station and the Cummer 42 bus line, with ample parking for those who drive (though we encourage carpooling when possible). We are adjacent to St. John’s Rehab site of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, and Guest House visitors are welcome to enjoy the 25 acres of parkland surrounding the hospital, as well as other nearby parks and quiet residential walking areas.

Most guest rooms are single, with shared baths, although we have a few twin and double rooms with ensuite baths. All linens are provided, and comfortable sitting rooms, library, and snack areas are available to both overnight and day guests. Most of the Guest House has wireless access. Conversation and the use of

cell phones are not permitted in guest rooms, to allow all guests the peace and silence they need for their own retreats. Designated common areas are available for quiet conversation, in addition to the courtyard and grounds. Meals are eaten in the Sisters' refectory, and are usually silent.

Guests are encouraged to join the Sisters in the Chapel of St. John for Morning and Evening Prayer, Compline (Night Prayer), and the daily Eucharist. Both the Chapel of St. John and St. Margaret's chapel in the Guest House are available for private prayer when not in use by a group.

For a map and more information about the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine and the Convent Guest House, contact us or visit our website at [www.ssjd.ca](http://www.ssjd.ca).

## **FOOD FOR THE SOUL: OPPORTUNITIES AND FEES**

### **DESIGN YOUR OWN PROGRAM**

Contact the Guest House for information on the following:

- Personal retreats scheduled to suit your timetable: for a day, a week, or longer if approved.
- Group retreats, quiet days, and workshops scheduled to suit your church or fellowship group. Bring your own leader or ask for a Sister (if one is available) to lead.
- Personal sabbatical time: come for a month or longer if approved, and enjoy the prayerful, peaceful environment of the Convent chapel, library, and gardens as well as comfortable accommodation and delicious meals. Contact the Guest House for more information and an application.

## PROGRAM FEES

**Retreats, Workshops, and Quiet Saturdays:** Fees (and deposits where applicable) are listed in the individual descriptions above.

**Personal Retreats:** Standard fee is \$80 per night, including three meals (\$70 for seniors; \$70 for full-time students with ID). If you would like to have individual spiritual direction during your retreat, the cost is \$35 per session.

**Bursary Assistance:** No one is turned away from a retreat because of inability to pay. Please let us know if you cannot afford the full cost of a retreat. We can assist with a special bursary fund supported by donations for this purpose.

### *Spend a Year Living in God's Rhythm* **Alongsiders and Companions Programs**

#### **Alongsiders Program:**

Are you a woman in transition? Contemplating next steps on your journey? Wanting to experience life in community, learn more about prayer, serve others, and take monastic values back into "the world"? Participants will live, work and pray among the Sisters, immersing themselves in the balance of prayer and service that is the heart of the monastic life. Study, recreation, retreat, and time off are built into the program.

#### **Companions Program:**

Are you a young woman in your 20s or 30s wanting to experience life in intentional community with other millennials? Are you interested in a gap year during university studies or between your studies and a job? Would you like to develop leadership skills that you can use in your later life and ministry, as well as develop a life of prayer grounded in

the spiritual practices that have nurtured Christians during 2,000 years? If so you might want to consider being a “Companion on the Way” for a year developing community with your peers in the context of the Sisterhood’s life and ministry.

**For Both Alongsiders and Companions:**

**Formation Courses:** Part of the year’s experience for both groups will be classes in spiritual formation offered in partnership with Wycliffe College at the Toronto School of Theology (University of Toronto). Courses can be taken either by audit (in which case there are no written assignments) or for academic credit (for those wanting to transfer credits back to their home institutions).

**Cost:** There is no cost for room and board for Alongsiders or Companions, but women who are accepted commit themselves fully to the Sisterhood’s life and work for the time they participate. College tuition fees (where applicable) will be the responsibility of the participant.

**Program dates:** September through July each year (exact dates to be arranged with successful applicants with some flexibility for the ending time).

**Application deadline:** June 15, 2017 (for September 2017 start)

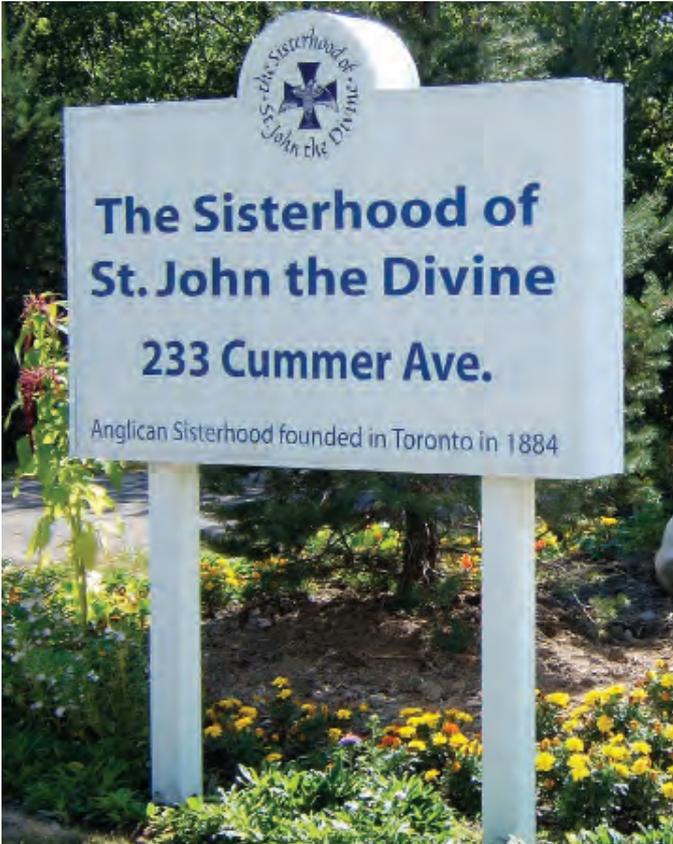
**For more information** and application forms e-mail Sister Constance Joanna Gefvert:

- For Alongsiders, at [cj@ssjd.ca](mailto:cj@ssjd.ca)
- For Companions, at [companions@ssjd.ca](mailto:companions@ssjd.ca)
- **Or** phone 416-226-2201, ext. 316.

For Alongsiders see also [www.ssjd.ca/alongside.html](http://www.ssjd.ca/alongside.html).  
For Companions see [www.ssjd.ca/companions.html](http://www.ssjd.ca/companions.html). See also the special Companions website and blog at [www.ssjdcompanions.org](http://www.ssjdcompanions.org)

**TO REGISTER FOR ALL  
FOOD FOR THE SOUL EVENTS:**

Please fill out a registration form and mail it to St. John's Convent with your deposit. Registration forms can be downloaded from our web site at **www.ssjd.ca** or can be requested from the Guest House office.



St. John's Convent Guest House  
233 Cummer Ave.  
Toronto, ON M2M 2E8  
Phone: 416-226-2201 ext. 305  
e-mail: [foodforthesoul@ssjd.ca](mailto:foodforthesoul@ssjd.ca)  
**www.ssjd.ca**