

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL CENTER

Letter from the Director

Recently I read Parker Palmer's latest book, *On the Brink of Everything*. He is reflecting on getting old and his reflections are wise and witty, born of purposeful work, struggles with depression and deep contemplation. He quoted a part of a Hindu epic called *The Ramayana*, as told by Aubrey Menen:



"There are three things which are real: God, human folly and laughter. The first two are beyond comprehension, so we must do what we can with the third."

Parker comments, "I am sure I'll experience all three today. The first is ever available, if my heart is open. The second is guaranteed, since wherever I go, there I am. As for the third, laughing at myself can easily consume a couple of hours a day, no problem."

That caused me to laugh a little so I am on my way with the third real thing. But I am thinking a little more about all of them.

God is real. God is central to what we do at FSC. Sure we take our inspiration from St Francis and St Clare who loved and imitated Jesus. And Jesus embodied God, who is real and is love. Our mission is to work with individuals and groups to connect or re-connect with, to awaken to, or fall in love with God.

Human folly for many people is no laughing matter. Humans not only make mistakes, but we can do unimaginable evil and convince ourselves that it is justified. It is almost incomprehensible but writers and teachers are helping us face our folly. I just finished reading *Caste*, by Isabel Wilkerson. She looks in depth at the Indian caste system, Germany and the terror unleashed by the Nazis and the United States institution and practice of slavery from the slave ships, to Jim Crow, to lynchings, to continued oppression of Black persons. It is human folly writ large and it has gone on for generations and generations and continues to inform and harm our democracy and our relationships. Human folly in the name of racism is very real and is now unmasked and seen on our streets and systems. How shall we respond to this reality?

Parker looks at laughter as a way to calm the ego, challenge the pride and arrogance, to take oneself less seriously. All good, but I started thinking about laughter as the cousin or sibling of Joy. And Franciscans follow the joyful fool who could sing to the birds, calm the wolf, and talk to the fish. He praised all of creation, even sister death. He was an instrument of peace and a dancer of joy.

I think we need the joyful contemplation of God so we have lightness and the strength to address human folly and the injustices we are capable of ignoring or perpetrating. And we need each other to keep it prayerfully and joyfully real. Thanks for being on the journey with FSC.

Laurey

Don't forget to connect with us on any of our many social media platforms!

- [Instagram](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Youtube](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Website](#)



How Sweet It Is

Thank you for joining us on Pi Day (3.14) and congratulations to Tom Welch, the winner of Pie for every month in the coming year. Thank you! May you always know some sweetness in your life.



Welcome

The FSC Advisory Board welcomed two new Board members this year. Carla Gonzales is a retired HR worker in multiple departments in Portland, an active member of St Andrew Roman Catholic church, an outspoken advocate for inclusion and justice, and a part of the Jesuit Volunteer EnCorp program. She joined the Auction Committee last year and is a lover of St Francis.



Ann Steigerwald is a native of Canada, lived for many years in the Netherlands, helped plant a church in The Hague, served as Chief People Officer of Communitas and is a co-owner/founder (with her husband, Dan) of Artesia Resourcing. As a consultant she helps resource leaders on the edge of ministry with coaching, assessment and training.

Mark Your Calendars- September 16 - Auction Time!

We hope to be back in person at the lovely gray Gables event space for sit down dinner – imagine how good that will be. Our auction will mostly be online but we look forward to some live elements. Know the committee has started working on a grand gathering and a fun way to support the ministries of the Franciscan Center. If you have a beach house or mountain cabin, a basket or a quilt, an art piece or can plan a dinner for 6 – we would love to feature that in our auction. Plus we need sponsorships to make the auction a success. We have hired an event planner (Carolyn Lee! Thank you Emmett for connecting us) to help us grow the auction experience and raise more money for the Center. Give Michelle a call to volunteer, or donate an item or to become or suggest a sponsor. Thank you.



FSC Survey

273 persons (a record number!!) filled out the survey and over 80 signed up for a free group spiritual direction session. We are so blessed and grateful. We received lots of suggestions for programs and heard from many new persons. Thank you to all who filled out the survey and who forwarded it to others. Thank you for giving us your ideas on how to serve the spiritual hunger and the yearning for an honest and caring community. Call us if you are interested in our new Group Spiritual Direction program - open enrollment will begin in the fall.



Spark - Forming Soulful Leaders

Hungry for connection and ideas to be a more grounded, clear and visionary leader? **Spark is for you.**

Looking for spiritual practices and supportive relationships for uncertain and challenging times? **Spark is for you.**

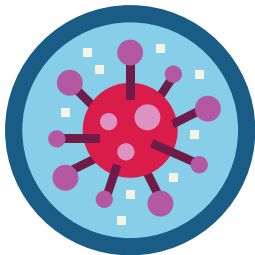
- Three 3 day residential retreats • Insightful presentations and small group discussion
- Small group coaching and direction between sessions
- Options and strategies for interpersonal and organizational challenges

The first retreat will be in October at Alton Collins with two more retreats coming in 2022. Apply before August 1 and receive a free coaching or spiritual direction session (a \$200 value).

You can find out all the information at www.sparkleadership.org

The Door is open a little at the Center

All the staff at the Center have received their Covid vaccinations. It will soon be possible for directees to meet with their spiritual director at the Center. Meeting outside, socially distanced, can happen now, with masks if the directee has not received the Covid vaccination. Meeting inside, on the first floor only is possible if both are vaccinated. We are watching state and county guidelines for when we will be able to host small groups. Patience and safety as we long for the opportunity to gather again.



Congratulations

- To staff member and spiritual director, Tom Welch, for his article in *Pastoral Liturgy*, on spiritual resources during a time of pandemic. Well worth a read -> Thank you Tom!
- to staff member Mark Lesniewski who lead a virtual Lenten series on mediation for St Luke Lutheran church in Portland
- to staff member, Eileen Parfrey who lead a women's retreat for Holy Family Roman Catholic Church in Portland



Friends of Francis

Join the Friends of Francis by making a monthly contribution to the Franciscan Spiritual Center. If you are interested in setting that up please contact Michelle.

Every little bit helps.



Upcoming Programs

Designing Your Space to Create!

Have you longed for a place where you could have peace, quiet and the room to work on your art or writing? Do you think that you don't have space for a studio or just need some creative ideas for how to begin? Join this on-line class as we discover ways to make the vision of a home studio a reality. We'll explore possibilities for creating a small space up to a size where you could share your space with others. All you need to bring is paper/pencil, questions and visions.

Date: Tuesday May 18, 2021

Time: 7-8:30pm OR

Date: Wednesday May 19, 2021

Time: 3-4:30pm

Led by: Denise Andersen

Cost: \$20 per person

Franciscan Taizé Service- Monthly

Ready the way for the Lord! Join us for our Virtual Taizé Service on the first Friday of the month at 7PM for an evening of prayer, music, and meditation. You can join us live via any of the following links:

On the FSC Facebook page at www.facebook.com/franciscanspiritualcenter/

On the FSC Youtube www.youtube.com/channel/UCnU5Q481l4l5dhjnXnLMaSw

Embodied Leadership

A lunch time exploration of bringing our whole selves: body, mind and spirit to the challenges and opportunities of being a leader. Focused presentations by Kelly Deutsch, Margaret Marcuson and Larry Peacock, the core leadership team at Sparkleadership.org.

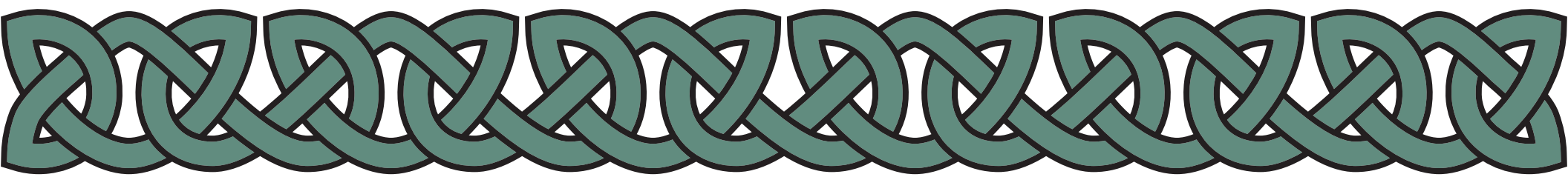
A free event. Take home some embodied practices to keep you sane and grounded in these times. Learn about Spark Leadership, a year long journey into soulful, authentic and resilient leadership.

Date: June 15, 2021

Time: 12:00-1:00pm

Facilitated by: Josh Kingsley

Cost: **FREE**



Walking the Beauty Way

A Virtual Celtic Pilgrimage and Prayer Journey

Looking for community, some walking partners?

Attracted to Celtic wisdom and love of creation?

Ready to be outside, walk and pray?

Then Join us for a virtual Celtic pilgrimage –

- No cooped-up travel to Ireland during a pandemic, but walking together outside and reflecting on the wisdom, prayers and stories of Celtic Pilgrims and Saints .
- At the same time, join in financial support of the Franciscan Spiritual Center in their spirituality programs that bring peace, presence and community to a hungry world.

You will be blessed by

- Three weeks of guidance and resources for prayer, art, and reflection
- Three guided walks in the beautiful green hills and paths in Portland
- Three zoom gatherings to form community and learn from Celtic saints
- Two spiritual guides from the Franciscan Spiritual Center (Eileen Parfrey, Larry Peacock)

June 2-23, 2021

Four Wednesday afternoon zoom gatherings (4-5pmm PDT).

Beginning June 2. Weekly guides and resources to prayer, art, beauty, and Celtic spiritual practices

Three Sunday afternoon walks (starting 2pm PDT) – Mount Tabor - June 6; Powell Butte - June 13;

Washington Park - June 20. If you are unable to join us because of geographical distance or mobility concerns, we have suggestions on how to accommodate this part of the pilgrimage.

Levels of Support

Pilgrim \$140 (Includes all the above and a Celtic patch!)

Sojourner - \$200 (Includes all the above Plus a bottle of wine and a box of shortbread)

Wayfinder - \$300 or more (Includes the above and makes it possible for others to find their way to the Franciscan Spiritual Center for spiritual direction or programs. Your gift helps others! Thank you!!)

Register Now. Limited Number of spaces on this pilgrimage. Sign up now!

