



MARCH 2020

# FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL CENTER



## Stay Connected during the Covid-19 Crisis

In a time where loving our neighbors and taking care of each other means socially distancing, we are taking those precautions as a team to protect each other and our community. But the need for connection does not go away, in fact it is more necessary then ever. So we are offering some of our programs online so that we can stay connected but also stay home and stay healthy.

### Spiritual Direction

Though we may not meet face to face, you can still be in contact with your spiritual director via phone or Zoom calls. You may call or email your director to set up appointments.

### Meditation Class

If you find yourself in a state of worry or anxiety, the next cycle of our Tuesday Mindfulness Meditation classes will be made available online as a place of centering and peace, facilitated by Mark Lesniewski.

### Universal Christ

Our Monday night book group study of Richard Rohr's, The Universal Christ, is meeting online with Sr. Theresa Lamkin and Eileen Parfrey.

One of THE BEST places to connect with us is online! At our various platforms below you will find words of encouragement and humor, blogs, videos, and other resources to help you stay connected during this time of social distancing! Just click the title or icon below to go directly to the platform of your choosing!

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



## Thank you...

To Mary Beth Patton for taking on the challenge of adding flowers to the beds and containers around the Center. The first bunch of flowers came from a gathering of the West coast Sisters of St Francis and Companions who gathered on March 7th in Portland.

To Karen Livengood for a deep cleaning of the Center to keep the building safe during the time of Covid 19 virus.

To Sr. Mary Jo and Eileen for putting the Spiritual Direction Training program online in such short notice and for the teachers who came and presented in an open room without a crowd.

To Mark Lesniewski, braving his technological challenges and facilitating the meditation class online.





# Looking Forward

## We Shall Walk: Labyrinth Update

Thanks to generous donors, many of you, over the last 7 months, we have raised over 90% of our goal and are ready to begin the construction of the new outdoor community labyrinth and the re-landscaping of the western side of the peace garden. Thank you for your interest and support. You are amazing!

PLC Estate Gardeners plan to begin construction on April 6 and following their work, Stephen Shibley, the labyrinth designer will begin his work on creating the labyrinth. We look forward to being back at the Center and having a new labyrinth for you to walk your prayers and meditations.

PS. We are still looking for donations toward benches for the labyrinth space. The 4 foot teak benches, with name plaque, are \$750 a piece. Please email me if you would like to sponsor one in honor or memory of someone special.

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**Join us next year on  
September 17th at Gray  
Gables for our special  
10th Anniversary  
Auction & Dinner!!**

## The 10th Annual Dinner and Auction

There will be an Auction this fall!! We are planning for it to be at Gray Gables and have selected a wonderful menu for our fourth visit to the beautiful estate.

We are also considering alternative ways to have the auction if the restrictions on gathering are still in place. We are in the process of hiring an auctioneer and beginning to gather items for the auction – baskets and items for the silent auction, adventures and trips for the live auction and group experiences for the easels. Please contact Val Hornburg - [valzhornburg@gmail.com](mailto:valzhornburg@gmail.com) or Terry Cappiello – [capterry@comcast.net](mailto:capterry@comcast.net) if you have items to donate.

We are also looking for sponsors for our 10th auction – contact Larry if you know of people or businesses who would like to sponsor the event – there are several levels of support and include tickets to the event.

We have an “early bird” ticket price of \$65 – so email Michelle to reserve yours or go online! The early bird price is only until August 15 so give us a call.





## Pilgrimage Update

The pilgrimage walk on St. Cuthbert's Way has been postponed until 2021 due to the Coronavirus.

The pilgrimage to walk the Portuguese Camino is still planned for late September. We hope with the late date, we will still be able to go. The brochure is available and we are taking registrations now. The Camino orientation meeting on April 26 is still on the calendar – we will keep you updated as we get closer to the date about whether we can gather in person or via Zoom.

The next pilgrimage to Assisi will be April 13-23, 2021. FSC Staff members Paula Gamble Grant and Tom Welch will be leading the retreat to Assisi. Watch for a brochure!



## Franciscan Hermitage Experience

Time for a retreat? The 4 day mostly silent Hermitage experience at Alton Collins Retreat Center, led by Sister Mary Jo, Terry Capiello and Michelle Kroll, could be just the opportunity for you.

The dates are May 22-25th, pending the end of the virus directives.

We are committed to holding this retreat even if we should have to creatively move to an online retreat. We presently have a full hermitage but we can certainly put you on the waiting list should someone cancel or we can add you to the November hermitage.



## Program Changes

Given the nature of the pandemic, many of our programs have had to be postponed or adapted to meet the needs of our community. Here are some changes to be aware of:

- The Richard Rohr Conference in May has been cancelled by the Center for Action & Contemplation
- The monthly Engaged Mysticism group will be meeting online.
- April meeting of the Spiritual Direction Training Program will be via Zoom
- Email the Center if you have questions – we are checking our emails and phone messages during this time away from the Center.

The decision to close the Center follows the directive of the Governor and is the correct one to insure the safety of our guests and staff. Yet, it does have financial consequences as we have cancelled programs and closed to groups that use the Center.

We are grateful for sponsorship of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia but we are dependent on program revenues and donations.

If you are in a position to help us continue to bring peace, presence and community with a gift, a check mailed or an on line donation, at this time, we would be grateful and others will be blessed. Thank you. Bless you.

[Click here to donate!](#)



# Encouragement & Reflection

## Lock Down

Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM

Yes there is fear.  
Yes there is isolation.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
Yes there is sickness.  
Yes there is even death.  
But,  
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise  
You can hear the birds again.  
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet  
The sky is no longer thick with fumes  
But blue and grey and clear.  
They say that in the streets of Assisi  
People are singing to each other  
across the empty squares,  
keeping their windows open  
so that those who are alone  
may hear the sounds of family around them.  
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland  
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.  
Today a young woman I know  
is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighbourhood  
So that the elders may have someone to call on.  
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples  
are preparing to welcome  
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary  
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting  
All over the world people are looking at their

neighbors, in a new way.  
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality  
To how big we really are.  
To how little control we really have.  
To what really matters.  
To Love.  
So we pray and we remember that  
Yes there is fear.  
But there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation.  
But there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
But there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness.  
But there does not have to be disease of the soul  
Yes there is even death.  
But there can always be a rebirth of love.  
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.  
Today, breathe.  
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic  
The birds are singing again  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,  
And we are always encompassed by Love.  
Open the windows of your soul  
And though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,  
Sing.

## Spiritual Nourishment Resources

- [Westminster Prayer & Worship](#)
- [Zoom Prayer Check-Ins & Virtual Worship Options](#)
- [Wild Edge of Sorrow](#)
- [Kid-Friendly Resources for Coping with Self-Isolation](#)
- [Center for Action and Contemplation Podcasts](#)
- [Illustrated Ministry](#)
- [The Creator in You- A Virtual Retreat On Creativity](#)
- [Spiritual Comfort for Troubled Times & Holy Week](#)

