



We have been hearing a lot about social distancing in the past few months. Lately, it's been driven by community health reasons, but it's certainly not new. Our culture has become more focused on the individual and less on community. We have seen the demise of many community organizations, events and venues over the years. One outcome has been more isolation, loneliness and boredom.

Besides this cultural movement, some aspects of our human nature seem to drive people apart. There is social distancing between rich and poor, people of different political views, people of different religious views, people with mental health issues, and the list goes on. The social distancing we are required to do today has given us as Franciscans much to ponder and pray about.

We recall how Francis reached out to the lepers, the poor and disenfranchised. His life proclaimed that love does not keep people at arm's length (or six feet for that matter). This pandemic will come to an end, but I am not so hopeful about the social distancing that will continue in our country. I think we all need some conversion of heart and through prayer and the grace of God, reach out to those who are isolated in our community.
—Franz

This month's Fraternity Gathering

April 19, 2020, 1:00 p.m. – Phone gathering.

NOTE: Instructions for the conference call will be included in the mailing

Agenda:

1. Opening prayer – Barb
2. LoH – Franz
3. Gospel sharing – Keith
4. Ongoing Formation – Darlene: JPIC
5. Business
 - a. Approve minutes, assign ministries
 - b. Treasurer reports, bills, receipts
 - c. Formation report
 - d. JPIC report
6. Vocation and closing prayers

Next month's meeting: May 17, 2020.

Ongoing formation – TBD

Gospel Reading, 6th Sunday of Ordinary Time: Jn 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

Faith Matters: Reflections from your Spiritual Assistant

As all of you know, we are living in the midst of a crisis unlike any of us have seen in our lifetimes. It raises all kinds of feelings in us: fear, frustration, hope, sadness, grief, and many others. What is our Christian and Franciscan response to it all?

First, I think it is important to remember that this is not the first catastrophe the world has experienced. It's easy in the middle of a crisis to imagine it is "like nothing anyone has seen before." The church has suffered before when all was thought lost: the destruction of the Temple and being cast out of synagogues, the great persecutions at the hands of the Roman Empire, the bubonic plague, centuries of corrupt churchmen, the Reformation, just to name a few. The trials of our ancestors remind us that, somehow, they and the Church survived.

Second, we cling to hope. Hope is a grace that can strengthen and encourage us. Hope, however, is not just a Pollyannaish sense that everything will work out. As the late Vaclav Havel said so wisely, "Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out." As Christians we have been, and still are, making sense of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and how they inspire us to live even in the face of tragedy. Prayer is our entrée into the wellspring of hope; fraternity is how we encourage each other to persevere. We do not know how this will turn out, but we remain faithful to God and to each other.

Here are thoughts for your reflection from others much wiser than me:

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness," Desmond Tutu.

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what is still possible for you to do," St. Pope John XXIII.

"All the great spiritual leaders in history were people of hope. Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Mary, Jesus, Rumi, Gandhi, and Dorothy Day all lived with a promise in their hearts that guided them toward the future without the need to know exactly what it would look like," Henri Nouwen.

"We live by hope. We do not always get all we want when we want it. But we have to believe that someday, somehow, some way, it will be better and that we can make it so," Hubert H. Humphrey.

"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope," Martin Luther King Jr.

My brothers and sisters, wash your hands, wear a mask in public, and stay safe. May all the angels and saints watch over us.

—Bob

Franciscan Saints/Blesseds of the Month

3 ST BENEDICT THE BLACK

Benedict was the son of freed African slaves who had been owned by a rich family in Sicily. He attracted attention, even as a youth, for his patience and charity. After being taunted on account of his color, he was invited to join an informal community of hermits.

By an order of Pope Pius IV this group was ordered to affiliate with a regular order and joined the Order of Friars Minor. Benedict's special gifts drew wonder and respect. Though illiterate, he had an extraordinary knowledge of Scripture and theology, and his gift for reading souls put him in great demand as a spiritual director and healer.

Benedict died in 1589 at the age of 63. He was canonized in 1807. St. Benedict has been claimed as a patron saint of African Americans.

16 ST BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS

17 ST BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE

21 ST CONRAD OF PARZHAM

23 BL GILES OF ASSISI

24 ST FIDELIS OF SIGMARINGEN

28 BL LUCHESIUS



REGIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Received April 4th from Hazel Martin, Queen of Peace Region Minister:

Hi everyone,
Please forward this email to your fraternity. The REC just met today, so that is why I didn't send this sooner.

1. For Palm Sunday, please find a live, green leafy branch, wherever you can, and attach it to your front door where it can be seen by people passing by. If your parish is still handing out palms, even better. The REC thought it would be a good way to celebrate Palm Sunday as a Region.
2. If you can, on this coming Good Friday morning at 10:00am, the REC is asking all Seculars in this Region to pray a Crown Rosary in your own home. More info. on this activity will be forthcoming in the next few days. The REC thought this is a way to be "one" in prayer.

ODDS 'N' ENDS

We had been scheduled to serve at Damiano next month. Due to the pandemic Damiano is not having volunteers in the building for the foreseeable future. Staff are preparing bag meals to hand out to the poor. Please keep Damiano in your prayers and make a financial contribution if you are able.

Please continue prayers for the selection of a new bishop for the Diocese of Duluth.

A chaplain colleague of mine was cleaning up her father's things following his recent death and came across several religious books that were important to him. She asked me to find a good home for them with people who could really appreciate them. Who better than Secular Franciscans? See the list on the next page. Let me know if you'd like any of them. First come, first served. I'll get them to you when we can travel freely again.
—Bob

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil and Jeff Keane



"How do Easter lilies know what date to open up their flowers?"

If the Last Supper were today, thanks to Zoom

Wisdom from Solanus Casey

- ❖ The thing the world calls "life" is so short after all, and the hereafter to eternal, that nothing here ought to really disturb us.
- ❖ Many are the rainbows, the sunbursts, the gentle breezes—and the hailstorms—we are liable to meet before, by the grace of God, we shall be able to tumble into our graves with the confidence of tired children into their places of peaceful slumber.
- ❖ Confidence is the very soul of prayer.



Books For the Taking

Title	Publisher or Author	Publishing Date
Saint Andrew Daily Missal	Dom Gasper Lefebvre	1949
Manual of The Third Secular Order of Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus	Carmelite Priory	1950
The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary	B. Herder Book Co	1953
The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Spiritual Life Press	1964
My Way of Life Pocket Edition of St. Thomas	Walter Farrell & Martin J. Healy	1952
The Imitation of Christ	Thomas a Kempis	1940
Lives of the Saints	Rev. Hugo Hoever	1955
Sunday Missal Prayerbook & Hymnal	Catholic Book Publishing Co.	1996
St. Joseph Pocket Edition of The New Testament	Catholic Book Publishing Co.	1986
Disalced Carmelite Proper Offices	Catholic Book Publishing Co.	1980
Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours	Catholic Book Publishing Co.	1976
Disalced Carmelite Proper Offices for Christian Prayer The Liturgy of the Hours	Catholic Book Publishing Co.	1980
The Seven Storey Mountain	Thomas Merton	1948
I am Going to The Father	Father Josef Kentenich	1963
Catechism of the Catholic Church	Liguori Publications	1994
The Jerusalem Bible	Doubleday & Co.	1966



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
©Ron Morgan
Reprinted with permission



Newsletter edited by Bob