

The Good News

. Padre Pio Fraternity gathers regularly on the first Saturday of the month at St.Helen Catholic Church in Georgetown, Texas. Usually we begin with Morning Prayer at 8:30 AM followed by the Gathering at the St. Rita Center, Rm 223. However, due to the Covid virus, we are gathering via Zoom. For more information, please see the website below.

Website: stpadrepioofs.com

Prayer Intentions:

For our Brother Leonard's continued healing.

For the continued healing of Jan Parker.

For our brother Mark G's Mother, Janet, that she recover from lymphoma.

For the health and well-being of Clarisa, and for her complete healing. Please comfort her, Lord, through the chemo-therapy.

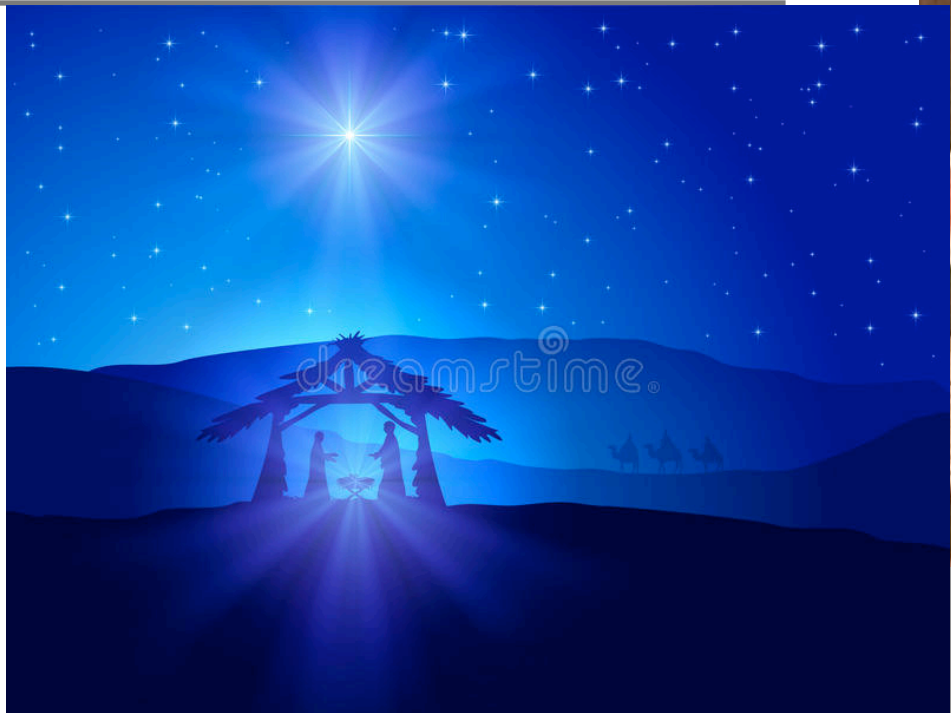
For all our Franciscan brothers and sisters, that we may empty ourselves and be open to his divine will.

As Covid surges, for the health and safety of our brothers and sisters.

That our nation's leaders will be led by the Holy Spirit.

For Mary Ann Walsh's continued recovery.

For brother Marv's healing and comfort.



For all the needs of our brother Deacon Luis and Lucy's family

For Valerie L. on her spiritual pathway to Christ.

Pope Benedict XVI explained that joy is still possible in a world with so much Suffering

The third Sunday of Advent is known as "Gaudete Sunday," from the Latin word for "rejoice." It is called this, from the first words of the second reading, because Christmas is near and the Church lifts the penitential atmosphere of Advent to turn our hearts to the joy that is to come.

Pope Benedict XVI reflected on this theme during a Sunday Angelus in 2007, and mentioned a frequently asked question in light of the great suffering that still exists in the world. He said, "Some people ask: but is this joy still possible today?"

This is a crucial question to answer, as it is difficult to see how we can rejoice when so many of us suffer.

Benedict XVI pointed to the saints for the key to unlock Christian joy.

Men and women of every age and social condition, happy to dedicate their existence to others, give us the answer with their lives! Was not [St.] Mother Teresa of Calcutta an unforgettable witness of true Gospel joy in our time? She lived in touch daily with wretchedness, human degradation and death. Her soul knew the trials of the dark night of faith, yet she gave everyone God's smile. In one of her writings, we read: "We wait impatiently for paradise, where God is, but it is in our power to be in paradise even here on earth and from this moment. Being happy with God means loving like him, helping like him, giving like him, serving like him" (The Joy of Giving to Others, 1987, p. 143). Yes, joy enters the hearts of those who put themselves at the service of the lowly and poor. God abides in those who love like this and their souls rejoice.

The key to joy is in serving others. This is something we don't always understand, as we often try to "make" happiness.

If, instead, people make an idol of happiness, they lose their way and it is truly hard for them to find the joy of which Jesus speaks. Unfortunately, this is what is proposed by cultures that replace God by individual happiness, mindsets that find their emblematic effect in seeking pleasure at all costs, in spreading drug use as an escape, a refuge in artificial paradises that later prove to be entirely deceptive.

Above all, we need to remember that lasting joy cannot be found in our own pursuits, but only in God. He alone can give us the joy we seek.

Dear brothers and sisters, one can lose the way even at Christmas, one can exchange the true celebration for one that does not open the heart to Christ's joy. May the Virgin Mary help all Christians and people in search of God to reach Bethlehem, to encounter the Child who was born for us, for salvation and for the happiness of all humanity.

St. John Paul II invoked Our Lady of Guadalupe's intercession, asking her to end all violence and division.

When St. John Paul II visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1999, he spoke very strongly against all kinds of injustices and violence.

Dear brothers and sisters, the time has come to banish once and for all from the continent every attack against life. No more violence, terrorism and drug-trafficking! No more torture or other forms of abuse! There must be an end to the unnecessary recourse to the death penalty! No more exploitation of the weak, racial discrimination or ghettos of poverty! Never again! These are intolerable evils which cry out to heaven and call Christians to a different way of living, to a social commitment more in keeping with their faith.

Not only did he speak against such evils, he also urged the American people to live-up to their vocation of holiness.

We must rouse the consciences of men and women with the Gospel, in order to highlight their sublime vocation as children of God. This will inspire them to build a better America. As a matter of urgency, we must stir up a new springtime of holiness on the continent so that action and contemplation will go hand in hand.

He saw the only way to end such grievances was through prayer and action, united together.

St. John Paul II concluded his remarks with a brief prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe, a prayer that still applies today.

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of Peace! Save the nations and peoples of this continent. Teach everyone, political leaders and citizens, to live in true freedom and to act according to the requirements of justice and respect for human rights, so that peace may thus be established once and for all. To you, O Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, belong all the love, honor, glory and endless praise of your American sons and daughters!



Profession Anniversaries

Manuel Cortez	December 6, 2003
Carlos Medina	December 6, 2003
Socorro Medina	December 6, 2003
Patricia Romano	December 8, 2002

Reminders for your Calender

1) "Fratelli tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship" Link below :

<https://saintmargaretofcortona.org/>

If you have questions, contact : carles3@gmail.com

2) Mail monthly dues to : Mark Watson, 4300 Far West Blvd., Austin, Tx, 78731

Check payable to Padre Pio Fratrnrity

By PayPal : PayPal.com, (Choose Friends and Family Option) Enter recipient's email :

sppofs.gtx@gmail.com

If you make a donation via PayPal please also send me a quick email to:

mwatson@utesxas.edu, to let him know.

3) First Saturday of the month @ 8:15 am > Link to St Helen Morning Mass:

<https://venue.streamspot.com/.video/fa7d1a056a>

4) To Donate to the Homeless : Link Below (You can add new items and buy them here)

<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1I47CT8F7IVKG/?>

[ref_=lol_ov_le&filter=default&sort=default&viewType=list](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1I47CT8F7IVKG/?ref_=lol_ov_le&filter=default&sort=default&viewType=list)

Send items to Gina Livesay's address unless you are attending the Apostolate. Thanks!

5) The Facebook website “Be Like Francis” is asking for donations for the Central Texas Food Bank. This page collected tons of winter clothes for the homeless last year :

Link:

https://m.facebook.com/nt/screen/?params=%7B%22fundraiser_campaign_id%22%3A3476114742613679%2C%22source%22%3A%22after_edit%22%7D&path=%2Ffundraiser%2F&_rdr

6) Next year’s spring Gathering dates: 2021.....thanks, Lynn!

- January 9 (date change due to holiday)
- February 6
- March 6
- April 10 (date change due to Easter holiday)
- May 1
- June 5

How to stay mentally healthy as the COVID pandemic goes on - From Aletea

thanks, Peter!

Jim Schroeder - published on 12/02/20

Don't become a statistic -- take these steps to stay well and flourish during this challenging time.

As the pandemic continues to ramp up for the winter, even as the hope of a vaccine looms on the horizon, it is becoming clear that COVID-19 has rendered more than infectious disease into our communities. On the top of the list are increased mental health difficulties, including in the workplace. A recent study indicates that 35% of employees nationwide are dealing with depression amidst the pandemic, but few are actually seeking out professional assistance.

A closer examination points to a few revealing statistics: One, it appears that the youngest generation of employees, including those from Generation Z, are struggling most, especially when compared to their elder counterparts (Baby Boomers). Two to three times more young people reported difficulty concentrating on their work while also feeling burnt out or emotionally drained by their job. Findings also indicate that women more than men are reporting challenges with inattention and reduced energy, while 65% of employees who report feeling chronically distracted at work are living with a vulnerable individual. Meanwhile, of those citing depressive-related symptoms, only 1 in 10 has reached out to a colleague and only 7% have sought professional help.

Evidence is increasingly mounting that the long-term mental health outcomes of COVID could be horrendous if we don't prioritize mental health in the weeks and months ahead. To do this, we must first begin with the "Big 4" as they relate to mental health: sleep, diet, activity, and screen/tech time.

There are now into the thousands of studies that indicate these areas have direct impact on our psychological functioning, and the pandemic has only magnified this. For starters, it is critical to note that while it may be hard to control certain outcomes (e.g., getting more sleep tonight), what is always available to us are our habits—the processes we employ that make a big difference in the short- and long-term. With Advent upon us, this is a great time to start new habits.

First let's look at the Big 4 ...

No matter where you are right now with respect to exercise, pick a simple, reasonable goal and commit yourself to it. It might be adding a 20-minute walk in the morning twice a week, or increasing your typical time on the exercise bike by 10 minutes.

When it comes to your diet, the goal is always to increase water intake and that of whole, natural foods. So, you might pledge to have one completely natural meal a day (I love my oatmeal, bananas, walnuts, cinnamon, and moringa every morning) or drinking only water on weekdays.

Changing your sleep habits might be just going to bed 10 minutes earlier than usual and shutting off all tech 30 minutes before bedtime (screens tend to make it harder to fall asleep).

And finally, speaking of screen time, maybe it is just limiting yourself to 10 minutes of "doomscrolling" a day, or only looking at the news every other day. Whatever the goal, it must be reasonable and practical in comparison to your current habits in order for it to have a chance to become a part of a more healthy routine.

Just as important is your mindset ...

Beyond the Big 4, we must increasingly work to cultivate a few specific mindsets, as I noted in a recent article .

As Victor Frankl—a man who almost lost his entire family in the Holocaust while narrowly surviving himself—once said, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms is to choose one's own attitude in any given set of circumstances." And so it is if we are to address unavoidable challenges with the pandemic.

We must work to foster three key perspectives in us and our children:

gratitude vs. disappointment

empathy vs. self-absorption

challenge vs. despair

It is perfectly normal to feel disappointed, self-absorbed, or depressed and despairing, but it is critically important to continuously and intentionally re-orient ourselves to gratitude, empathy, and challenge if we are to be resilient in our current situation.

There is one more significant focus that remains paramount when it comes to staying mentally healthy ...

It is the opportunity we have NOW — and this doesn't change whether we're sitting in prison or lying in a hospital bed. All of us need to plan for the future and be aware of the past. But when our hearts and souls are anywhere but the present moment, it's both overwhelming and immobilizing. And it's a huge factor in why psychological conditions develop.

No matter where we find ourselves in regards to this pandemic, any positive movement will require mindful discernment of what is needed in the moment. Maybe for you that's a simple cleansing breath and a few minutes of silence each day. Maybe it's reaching out to a friend or colleague and sharing honestly about the difficulties that are plaguing you. Maybe it means taking advantage of EAP services at work, or contacting a therapist. Or maybe, it means leaving your phone at home, and taking a walk to begin or end your day.

2020 seems to have no limit when it comes to presenting us with challenges, but the promise of our lives—pandemic or otherwise—is that every moment presents us with options to take a better road, no matter where we've been, or what lies ahead.

Jim Schroeder is a married father of eight children, a pediatric psychologist, and an endurance athlete.

Advent is a Time of Waiting

A waiting person is a patient person. The word 'patience' means the willingness to stay where we are and live the situation out to the full in the belief that something there will manifest itself to us... Patient living means to live actively in the present and wait there. Waiting, then, is not passive. It involves nurturing the moment, as a mother nurtures the child that is growing in her womb. Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna were present to the moment. That is why they could hear the angel. They were alert, attentive to the voice that spoke to them and said, 'Do not be afraid. Something is happening to you. Pay attention.'...

Much of our waiting is filled with wishes...We want the future to go in a very specific direction, and if this does not happen we are disappointed and can even slip into despair. That is why we have such a hard time waiting; we want to do the things that will make the desired events take place. Here we can see how wishes tend to be connected with fears.

But Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna were not filled with wishes. They were filled with hope. Hope is something very different. Hope is trusting that something will be fulfilled according to the promises and not just according to our wishes." [The Path of Waiting]

Henri Nouwen Society, November, 2019

And here is what we say together!

Please click on the picture below.....



May each of you
feel the Love, and
know the
Salvation that
came to us in a
manger.

Stay Awake! Be Alert!

Bob Pine, ofs, Minister

Peter Gruning, ofs, Formation Director

Lynn Freeman, ofs, Secretary

Gina Livesay, ofs, Vice-Minister

Mark Watson, ofs, Treasurer

Judy Puetz, ofs, Spiritual Assistant