



Our Lady of the Rosary Secular Franciscan Fraternity Williamsburg, Virginia

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HAPPY NEW YEAR, Franciscan Sisters and Brothers!

By the time some of you receive this many have begun the task of taking down and putting away the Christmas lights and decorations, while we Puerto Ricans are just gearing up for our fiestas.

The next 8 days are called the “Octavas” during which friends get together late evening to take ‘parrandas” (similar to caroling but much more rowdy with guitars, maracas, guiros, and other noise makers) to family and friends. A few will gather and head towards someone’s home, making noise & singing, where they are greeted with snacks and drinks. This host then joins the parranda and off they go to another home, also greeted with food and drink. Hosts join the group as they continue, until they reach the last house for that night. There they eat a full meal, usually asopao, a very thick chicken and rice “stew”, drink, tell jokes & chat about the evening as they plan for the next parranda.

Epiphany, or Three Kings Day, falls within the Octavas; this is our Christmas, or Little Christmas. Always celebrated on the 6th of January,

on the Eve of the 5th kids are given a box to fill with grass for the Magis’ camels (or horses). They place this box under their bed(s), full of expectations of gifts to be found the next morning. After kids are asleep parents place small gifts in the box or, if it’s a large gift, hints as to where to find it. Many families have already celebrated Santa Claus so this time the gift may be something for all the children, a swing set, for example.

Then there’s the “Octavitas”, another 8 days. There are some family & friends get-togethers during this time but not as rowdy as the previous 8 days. Holiday decorations are slowly taken down, with some stored for the following year

Puerto Ricans know how to party; we also know how to honor God. Christmas Eve & Epiphany Eve (Three Kings’Day) you will find families attending the “Misa de Gallo”, midnight Mass. It’s called The Rooster Mass because by the time you get out the roosters are crowing.

Each culture has its own way of celebrating the coming of Jesus. We make sure it’s a joyful as well as a sacred welcome.

Pax et Bonum to all! Maria

Important Dates:

1/10 Donna Kendall—Birthday
1/16 Fraternity Meeting 1:00pm

Live A Life Worthy of Your Call

Secular Franciscan Order – USA
National Theme - 2021



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Richard Churray, Vice Minister

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ. May the Lord bring you peace this new year. Yes it's hard to believe that we're completing year two of Covid mandates. We have learned how to do many things in different ways. Our lives are different, our relationships are different. Our fraternity is different. We have been Zooming for almost two years. Going forward our meetings will be hybrid. We enjoyed a retreat in person. At which time we rededicated ourselves to the fraternity and to the Secular Franciscan Order. We must now move forward as a fraternity to strengthen our relationship with God and with each other. We will still have many challenges ahead with Covid. I pray we will be vigilant with safety protocol and vaccinations! If you are not vaccinated please carefully pray about this and reconsider being vaccinated.

This year brings us many opportunities to strengthen our relationship with Christ and with us our seraphic father Francis through our ongoing formation within the fraternity our own private prayer time. I encourage each of you to reassess your prayer life and work on improving or modifying what you do to deepen your prayer journey. Journaling is a way to do this. I am a reluctant writer so journaling is difficult. I must start myself over and over again. So one of my goals this year is to journal twice a week. I do find that when I journal my words become more meaningful and I begin to understand myself a bit more each time. I begin to understand what God is asking, calling me to do.

The new year brings with it the time for new resolutions. A time to begin again. Let us begin our Franciscan journey anew opening our hearts to the words and example of Saint Francis our beloved father so that we more fully live our lives the way he lived his. One way we can do this is to be prepared for our formation sessions. Our formation director, Peg Crew, works hard to develop our formation time. For our part we need to prepare too.. Please continue to read FRATELLI TUTTI and do the questions in the study guide. I find journaling on each question very helpful.

Our fraternity covers a large area. We cannot always participate in a Williamsburg based apostolate. It is important for our fraternity to know about what your personal apostolate is. We as a community can be praying you and the work you do for Gods people. Please send in information about you personal apostolate to Maria or myself so we can have them put in our newsletter.

I pray you each had a very Merry Christmas and the New Year bring good health and new adventures! Happy New Year!

Apostolate Information



Paul Reardon and Rick Churray's apostolate in Mathews, Virginia called "Hands Across Mathews" distributed food to over 250 families in December.

Rick and Barbara Churray prepared meals for the G.U.E.S.T. program clients on December 19, 2021.

G.U.E.S.T Stands for "Gloucester United Emergency Shelter Team" is a rural winter homeless shelter.

We are a coalition of religious and community organizations that provide hypothermic shelter during the winter months. G.U.E.S.T. operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the winter months to provide a day shelter and a night shelter for the homeless in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck area. The purpose of G.U.E.S.T. is to be a faith-based nonprofit organization that demonstrates Christ's compassion by providing for the physical, spiritual, emotional, and other identified needs of men, women and children who are homeless or near homeless.

January Formation



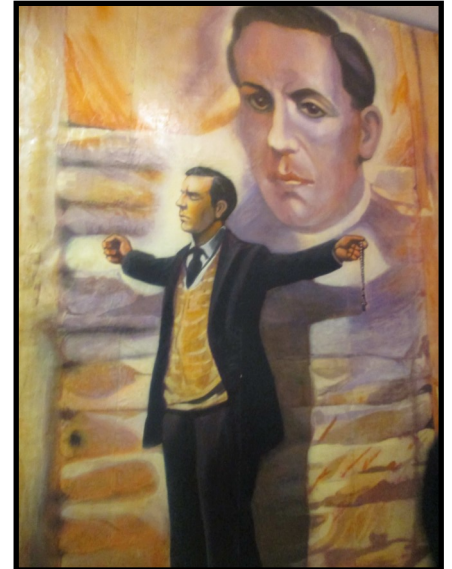
This month we will continue to study Pope Francis's Encyclical Letter, **Fratelli Tutti**, on **Fraternity and Social Friendship**. This month we will look at chapters 3 and 4. Please read the chapters and answer the questions that can be found in the study guide. All should have received an email with a copy of the guide.

Many of the topics covered in the Encyclical have both social and political implications. Please look at these questions and topics from a Secular Franciscan point of view. What would be the position of St. Francis on these topics. What resonates with you?

Where do we find ideas and actions from Article 13 appear in *Fratelli Tutti*?

Did You Know?

Karen Coulson went on a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. While in Mexico City she also visited a museum dedicated to Blessed Miguel Pro, S.J.



Member Profile—Maria Fuentes-Sherman, SFO

I am a military "Brat" as a result of my Dad's second career, the Army. His first career & love was as a singer - that's where I got my love for music & singing. I was born in Puerto Rico & traveled with my Dad & family to most of the places where he was stationed.

My Dad was very insistent that we observe the culture of every place we visited. We traveled to Panama by ship when I was 6. Our quarters were right next to a cliff, with the treetops of the jungle reaching over the edge. Have you ever seen a live sloth? We did, hanging upside down from its claws, & once we came home from shopping to find a snake slowly making its way up the stairs. While in Panama we "vacationed" in the jungle with an indigenous group. Will never forget eating freshly made goat cheese, as well as goat meat roasted on a spit & sleeping on the ground.

In Kansas Dad took us to just about every historical western site, including a cemetery where Billy the Kid's grave supposedly was & oh, the many carnivals that came through. One of the most impressive sights was the open valley with buffaloes grazing - those babies are BIG!

When we lived in Germany we went camping all over Europe. Dad did all the cooking while we traveled, & in Rome he decided to make rice. The camping ground we were staying at was on top of a hill & very windy. Dad had me hold a metal shield to keep the fire from blowing out. Unfortunately, the wind being stronger than I blew that piece of metal so that the boiling pot of water sloshed over & onto my foot - I traveled through the rest of Italy with only one sandal on.

We visited Paris & Lourdes, & in Madrid stayed with friends from P.R. living there while studying to become doctors. In the mornings you would hear the various vendors touting their wares; there was even one who bought old bread; it was used to make bread pudding which they then sold! In Barcelona we were able to visit the beautiful still unfinished Cathedral, & my brother & I almost drowned in the waters of Costa Brava. And my Dad, who spoke perfect Spanish, started yelling for help in English! By the time he got me to the shore I was unconscious & he had to do CPR on me. Then, for reasons I couldn't understand because the worst had already happened, he decided we had to leave the area. We camped in the mountains in Basque country between Spain & France, in the middle of nowhere.

I went to Department of Defense schools most of the time, but in Kansas went to a Catholic school, St. Francis. When we came back to the States from Europe Dad was stationed in Georgia. That was about the time the Cuban "boat people" started coming to Florida; Dad was assigned to translate. Because Dad would soon be retiring from the Army & we would be returning home I was sent to stay at Grandma's to finish my last year of high school. I went to University of Puerto Rico on a 4-year scholarship & became a teacher. I've taught just about every grade, from pre-kinder in the summer to College level. I was chosen to be an Exchange Teacher in New York City my third year as a teacher, & that's where I met my husband. And that's another story for another day!!



If you wish to mail your monthly fraternity donation please send your check to treasurer, Barbara Massey, 862 Ventnor Drive, Newport News, VA 23608-8927. **Please make checks payable to SFO. Thank you!**