



Our Lady of the Rosary
Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Williamsburg, Virginia

www.olsrfo.weebly.com

May 2020

Important Dates:

- 5/17 Meeting – Location TBD
- 5/20 Sr. Julianna – Birthday
- 5/21 Cindy Holland – Birthday
- 5/25 Maria Fuentes-Sherman – Birthday

Dear Franciscan Brothers & Sisters,

It was so nice to see the friendly faces of those who joined us for our virtual meeting this last Sunday. Thank you to Peg for setting up and to Donna for the wonderful Formation presentation. We will attempt a repeat in May. Stay tuned!

In the midst of this pandemic, the worrying for our loved ones and the suffering of so many, we can still find cause to rejoice. This is the case for 5 of us members of this Fraternity. We are celebrating the Anniversary of our Profession of Faith. What a glorious event then and now as we recall how we acquired a whole new family of brothers and sisters in Christ!

I hope you are all finding ways to make each day of “stay at home ” time count. Some of us have decided to finally go through closets and attics and discard items no longer needed. Some may be learning new skills or taking virtual classes. The W & M OSHER program is offering a few free ones. Or Hillsdale College has many interesting courses, also free, and many cover religious history or theology. And Ascension also has very good live & recorded presentations.

Whatever you’ve chosen, remember: Prayer has not been cancelled. Is your heart longing for Mass? Many parishes are live streaming the Mass. If you are not computer savvy, look for it on TV.

Above all let’s put our trust in God. Worrying has been defined as a lack of trust. We are fortunate to have a loving Father who sees and cares for us. I choose to place myself and my loved ones in his loving hands. Will you join me?

Pax et Bonum,
Marla / QK



During the COVID-19 meeting restriction, if you wish to continue 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.

Also fraternity polo shirts and hoodies have been ordered. If you have ordered an item, please remember to send your payment to Barbara Massey at the address stated above.



Visit our website at olsrfo.weebly.com

2020 Summer Seminar

CANCELLED

The July 9-12, 2020 Summer Seminar at Saint Francis University, Loretto, PA has been cancelled. The university will be closed until the end of July at this time and may continue to stay closed through the summer.

What are you doing the COVID-19 Lockdown

What are we doing at the Murphy House?

RCIA goes on for Langley AFB through Zoom gatherings.

Our Divine Mercy Ceneclis is using The Second Greatest Story Ever told by Fr Gaitley.

My husband put together another shed.

The oldest daughter stops by with what she thinks we need.

We're texting photos back and forth with our daughter who is raising their grandchildren.

Our great grandkids bounce from wild child to sedate.

Our son who is building a race car in his spare time, well, ongoing texting there too.

We have learned to be accepting of substitutions when ordering groceries for pick up.

You may find me waiting outside Trader Joes in line. I consider it "my" grocery store.

My outside time is usually planting herbs & flowers, maybe some veggies next.

Praying, praying, praying for our family in blood, our family in the Spirit & our family in talent.

Carol Murphy, OFS

This isolation has helped me reconnect to my old practices of daily readings of Daily Guideposts that has a scripture references. Gives me time to ponder how author finds the scripture. My protestant friends are very faithful in scripture study. I also have plans to clean out old CDs and tapes that have not only Catholic music but Protestant hymns. I find it so peaceful.

My friend Julie who has Lymphoma now after 10 yrs. of a cure from breast cancer is struggling w/ chemo and other therapies. I have been praying a rosary daily w/her and we take time to tell stories about Mary and Jesus. I know that this may be short lived as she is suffering so much. I told her to bug off when she's not up to it. I may have to find a rosary partner on those days.

Barry & I have a priest friend of 40 + yrs. He is a retired Army chaplain. He called one day and we talked for about 1 hr. He said "I kind of enjoy this forced isolation. It has helped me get closer to Jesus. This surprised us for he is a deeply spiritual man.

As a side if you have not seen the movie "The 2 Popes" you are in for a treat.

Pax et Bonum, Cindy Holland, OFS

My daily routine begins with prayer time, 8:15 Mass watching Word on Fire, and then taking Chewy our Chihuahua for his morning walk. I have also been making daily calls to one of the residents who is confined to her room at the Verena. Betty has no children and no computer so her days are long. It has been fun getting to know Betty who is among the 12 people we used to visit on a weekly basis to bring the Eucharist. The Williamsburg Faith In Action is implementing a daily check-in call for some of their clients so I will be adding that to my routine. Since it's Springtime the garden requires daily attention as I am surrounded by God's creatures singing their songs. I take Chewy for another walk and I listen to Evening Prayer from the Divine Office app. I understand how blessed I am to have this time to become a human being, instead of a human doing.

David and I have been following the stay at home order issued by our governor and have been making some important decisions regarding downsizing. We have made several trips to the FBOSP group home on Hickory Sign Post Road with donations of winter clothing, household goods, books, etc. where Sister Agnes and her team can use these donations in her ministry. We have made the decision to relocate to Ave Maria, FL after the COVID-19 crisis has abated. We are attracted to this town near Naples, FL because the town is built around the Catholic Church. Our plan is to buy a house a few blocks from the church so I can attend daily Mass and take advantage of the many offerings through the Ave Maria parish and Ave Maria University. There is also a Secular Franciscan Fraternity in Ave Maria (I believe this is where Chris and Leo meet when they make their annual trip to Florida) and I will be within driving distance to Immokalee where I can assist the poor by partnering with Catholic Charities. David has located a golf course where he will be able to get his daily golf fix 365 days a year. I also have family members in the area and have stayed in contact with our Naples friends; we spent 16 years in Naples before we moved to North Carolina in 2001. This has been a process in arriving at the decision to move; we have been trying to downsize and simplify for the past three years and could not find what we wanted in Williamsburg, plus I hate cold weather.

Bea Sanford, OFS ~ Secretary

During the quarantine I (*Chris*) have been golfing (with social distancing of course), reading several books, following virtual Osher classes and choir practices and playing lots of bridge online. In addition watching my hair grow has been a great pastime LOL. Also tried several new recipes as well as some oldies I haven't made in years. Reason #1 I try to walk 2 miles a day! I make a visit to church a couple of times a week and the grocery store is my great escape! We also have the cleanest home in Williamsburg! Leo has been listening to lots of audio books and following courses on Audible as well as the virtual Osher classes. He plays chess online with one of our kids who gave us a 100 DVD collection of old movies which he has been watching using binoculars. He tries to take a walk every day. Still.... for us extroverts these are really tough times! Stay safe everyone.

Leo Wells, OFS and Chris Wells, OFS

Before Lent began my husband and I decided we would not watch T.V. So... what would we do to replace the time lounging in front of the T.V.?

Since our youngest child joined the Air Force and we were once again empty nesters we decided to start getting our house ready to sell. Our plan is to downsize and move fairly soon. We began by making a list of jobs to get the house ready to put on the market. We went to Lowes and purchased all of the supplies we needed and prepared a plan.

Our next question was ... what are we going to do in the evening when we aren't working on projects. After all, there is only but so much spiritual reading and praying you can do especially on a Saturday evening? So, we decided we would learn Italian (since we plan to one day take a trip to Italy) and we purchased "adult" paint by number kits.

Now, we were all set to enjoy the Lenten season. And then, COVID-19 struck.

Even though all our lives have changed, we decided to continue with our plan. We have patch the walls in three bedrooms, repainted the ceilings, changed the color of the children's former bedrooms to a neutral color (which required several coats of paint), changed the color and repainted two bathrooms, replaced the gaskets on all 4 toilets, and replaced the light fixtures in all four bathrooms. I cleaned 28 windows along with the screens (inside & out), cleaned 2 sets of French door windows and 5 other glass doors, shampooed all the carpets in the house, as well as took time to declutter as we went along. The entire house is spotless from top to bottom. Sorry Chris, I think I might have the cleanest house. 😊

The work projects have also continued to the outside. I have spruced up three flower gardens, painted the front of the house, planted a garden and hauled in a truck load of wood that we split & stacked for the winter. The amazing thing is that we had planned and purchased all of these materials before Lowes and Home Depot had an explosion of people racing to get things to complete long lists of projects in their homes (remember, we planned and purchased supplies before Lent).

In addition to the many projects, I have been working every day at the school (7:30-3:30) and every other weekend at the funeral home. I have read 5 books. The latest is The Lord by Romano Guardini. Like Carol, I watched Divine Mercy - The Second Greatest Story Ever told by Fr Gaitley. I have been praying more, connecting with friends, writing letters and attending Mass virtually (although I was lucky enough to attend Good Friday service at our parish within the 10 person limit). Oh, and the paint by number set is coming along nicely. I am so glad we bought this before Lent because apparently they are sold out of almost everything. I know someone who purchase a kit after the lockdown began and she is still waiting for the kit to arrive. Anyway, I am grateful for the time I have been able to spend with my husband and I am thankful for my health!

Karen Coulson, OFS



The paint by number kit I am working on and my finished 1,000 piece African Safari puzzle.

Return to Eden

How have I been spending my shelter-in-place/lockdown/quarantine time? For the first few days I was distraught, on the verge of feeling angry. I was supposed to leave for Italy in March to visit my family. But they were already sheltered-in-place/locked-down/quarantined - so my trip was canceled. Since then I've learned that one of my uncles passed away in a nursing home, alone. I don't like to remain distraught or angry, even if I have good reasons so I decided to adapt to the so-called new normal which as I soon discovered was an old normal. I don't like being indoors so I went out daily for extended periods of time to work in my garden. It's a small garden but it has three grape vines, a small olive tree, herbs, tomatoes and pepper plants. Because of the lockdown all is so quiet and peaceful that I can actually hear bees buzzing around me, birds singing and gentle breezes blowing through natient leaves. The world feels new like the Garden of Eden. I found that I was confined to an isolation with God as my companion. It must have felt this way back at the beginning of time. Yet, evil (in the form of a virus) now lurks within the reach of one bad decision. But I feel safe as long as I obey the commands and stay close to God through prayer and primitive work. Primitive - Latin meaning original, or first things. I was no longer distracted by technology, the demands of modern life, or pressing commitments. I'd been liberated and all I wanted to do was spend time in the garden with God. One morning as I was pulling weeds around the grape vines I sensed a presence as though I were surrounded by others joining me to pull up weeds. I had been thinking of my family (the ones I was meant to visit in Italy the month before) but I was surrounded by my family that has passed on - my parents, my grandparents, numerous aunts, uncles and cousins that have gone before me to the garden of Paradiso. My little garden was full of memories of ancestors who had tended our family land in Italy for generations. They'd lived in a time when modern distractions were not a choice available to them. My family had come to visit me. What a wonderful surprise! I'd been missing the sacraments, but experienced a communion of saints. I'd been missing the ability to do the things I wanted to do but was given the freedom enjoy an intimacy with God instead. Just before the order to stay home, my granddaughters spent the night. As usual they wanted to watch a movie before bedtime. They chose Charlotte's Web. I hadn't watched that movie since my own children were small. Of course, songs from the movie stayed in my head long after the movie was finished. Once the children went home and I began working in my garden the song from the movie ran through my head in a meaningful way. "How very special are we for just a moment to be part of life's eternal rhyme. How very special are we to have on our family tree Mother Earth and Father Time." This stay-at-home policy has given us back something very special - a chance to spend time with Mother Earth and having plenty of Father Time. Using that time to appreciate God's creation and to thank Him for His blessings, and praying for those who are suffering has been a unique gift. Every day in the garden I open up a new gift: a special gift of understanding. As a social butterfly I initially felt like my wings had been clipped. But, they hadn't been clipped at all. I've had time in the cocoon and now as a brand new type of butterfly I'm experiencing the world differently - as God intended - in His presence.

During our "forced monasticism" ~ Marie Stephan, OFS and Chuck Stephan, OFS

... Chuck is baking bread for neighbors

