



Our Lady of the Rosary
Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Williamsburg, Virginia

www.olsrfo.weebly.com



2021

**November 21st Fraternity
Gathering Hybrid at St. Bede
Details to follow!**

Important Dates:

11/3 Eileen Murray — Birthday
11/5 Peg Crews — Birthday
11/19 Glenda Hines — Birthday
11/21 Glenn Davis — Birthday
11/21 Fraternity Meeting 1:00pm
11/24 Sr. Agnes — Birthday

November Formation



This month we will continue to study Pope Francis's Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship*. This month we will finish looking at Chapter 2 and move on to Chapter 3. 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. I am especially interested in your thoughts on Chapter 2 questions 3 and 4. What resonates with you?

We will also have a short presentation by Carol.

**Live A Life Worthy of
Your Call**

Secular Franciscan Order – USA
National Theme - 2021

A call to the fraternity:

We are looking for formation ideas!

- What would you like to read?
- What have you read and would like to bring to the fraternity?
- Is there a topic you would like us to explore in greater depth?
- Is there a Franciscan saint or saints you would like to learn more about?
- Would you like to learn more about Franciscan prayer?

Contact Peg or Donna with your thoughts.

Visit our website at olsrfo.weebly.com



Did you know?

Donna Kendall speaks to the 3rd – 5th grade students at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School about the message of St. Francis ... “Be a messenger of peace”.



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.**



20th Quinquennial Congress Come Join for a Jubilee Celebration of Franciscan Joy

August 3-7, 2022
Phoenix, AZ

Registration is now open!

For more information and to register go to our national

website at: <https://secularfranciscanusa.org/>

A simple Franciscan reflection ~ Donna Kendall

Nearly twenty-two years ago we were all concerned about something called Y2K, remember that? Everything was supposed to crash and life would never be the same. Well here we are having completed two decades and a bit more of the new millennium and last year we encountered something the Y2K fear mongers never envisioned: a global pandemic. Immediately, we understood the reality of its dangers, its widespread implications and sufferings, and its death toll. We complied with mask mandates, lockdowns, and social distancing. We complied with physical estrangement from our families and missed out on seeing grandchildren and other loved ones. We grieved on an entirely new level when loved ones passed away in nursing homes or hospitals without our ability to be near them in their last hours. We postponed funerals, weddings, and baptisms. We blew out a measly candle on a cupcake all alone or zoomed with family to create a new way to celebrate. Holiday gatherings were forbidden. We streamed the Mass on our computers or phones and discovered “spiritual communion” instead of receiving Christ’s body physically in our mouths. We prayed for the day all this would be over. And then, thanks to science and hard-working researchers, we had a vaccine and everything would go back to normal. But, has it? In 2020 we learned how to be socially distant.

Millions of people waited as patiently as possible to receive the two doses of the vaccine while essential workers and those with compromising illnesses received theirs first. We registered to receive the vaccine at various locations in order to relieve our fears and be safe from the horrific corona virus with great anticipation. We’ve endured great suffering, sacrifices, and challenges so that lives could be saved and our lifestyles could return to a semblance of normalcy. Yet, daily we read that millions of people globally are refusing the vaccine. These acts of non-compliance are incomprehensible after all we’ve been through. Many people who have suffered the most are angry with those refusing the vaccine. Not only are they angry, they believe their dismay is justified by science. “If only everyone would do what they’re supposed to, we could go back to normal.” Others have rejected the unvaccinated at social gatherings due to their status. Still others have chastised and violently berated those who have chosen to refuse the vaccine. This has led to new political responses known as vaccine mandates. In Europe, a green pass has been issued to the vaccinated so that the individuals might be admitted to public functions. After all this, it is baffling to hear that there are still millions upon millions who remain unvaccinated. These medical insubordinates do not care about others; they are selfish people who have no regard for the well-being of humanity. They do not deserve the same privileges as those who have been vaccinated. It is reasonable to treat them as social outcasts. I have even heard, “We hate to say this but it might be conducive to isolate those who do not comply for the sake of all humanity.”

This last proposal sounds much like a leper colony. I can hear the mental responses already - the lepers did not have a choice to become ill with leprosy; the unvaccinated are refusing the vaccine willingly and have a choice to do the right thing. This obstinate reluctance becomes another reasonable justification for ostracizing an entire population of people. What would Francis do in this situation? The question is not directed at whether Saint Francis would have taken or refused the vaccine; let us not be tempted to introduce that argument. Whether Francis had been vaccinated against leprosy (had there been such a vaccine) or not, would he have shunned the unvaccinated?

My brothers and sisters, this controversy has become an opportunity to put our money where our mouths are, so to speak. This clash of social, medical, and political ideas has become a litmus test for our Franciscan spirituality. Do we only treat people with dignity if they comply with medical, social, and political norms? Are we basing our responses to the unvaccinated on science or on Christian charity? Whatever the unvaxed person’s reasons for refusing this vaccine - they do not wish to submit their bodies to a science experiment; they wish to give this rapidly developed antidote to covid the test of time; as in the case of Southwest airline pilots they are concerned about the side effects - that is on them. Our responses are on us.

It is said that the stance for vaccine refusal begs some very important questions: why are people willing to risk their livelihoods and lose their jobs by rejecting this vaccine? Why are thousands and thousands of doctors and other medical professionals refusing the vaccine? Let us bear in mind that whatever their reasons, they are still in need of our Christian-Franciscan love, perhaps more than anyone else at this moment because of the isolation and threats they are now facing.

To be Christians, to be followers of Saint Francis of Assisi, we do not have to have all the answers to these questions; we need to treat others with charity, understanding, with pardon and faith, with joy and consolation, regardless of their vaccinated status. Saint Francis approached the lepers with a heart filled with joy and Christ's love at the risk of contracting leprosy himself. His brothers back at the Portiuncula did not require a special "card" to prove he was fit for reentry. Let's not turn the unvaccinated in our society into the new lepers. Let us stay focused on our professed promises to serve in *humility*; let us see the face of Christ in the unvaccinated as the Father sees in every person the features of his Son; to accept with a gentle and courteous spirit all people as a gift of the Lord. Saint Francis did not need to become a leper in order to empathize and love the lepers. What a tremendous challenge for us in our day and age - to love unconditionally. Let's not put conditions on our social acceptance of others - after all we are - Fratelli Tutti which in Italian means we are all brothers and sisters.



Prayer Request

Please remember to pray for a speedy recovery for our brother, Paul Reardon



Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty, reflected in all the peoples of the earth, so that we may discover anew that all are important and all are necessary, different faces of the one humanity that God so loves. Amen.

Pope Francis October 2020