



- the Chimes -

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P.O. BOX 29506
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20017
JANUARY 2024 Vol. LXVIII, No. 1
January 1, 2024

WE WILL MEET ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 1:00 PM FOR LUNCH, 1:30 PM MEETING IN THE ST BONAVENTURE ROOM.

Meeting Agenda: Sunday, January 21, 1:00-3:00 pm

- 1:00 - Social and Lunch
- 1:30 - Opening Prayer
- Announcements and News of Members
- Open Discussion on Future of Fraternity
- Evening Prayer and Closing

Zoom info for our infirm members:

Join by computer:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82584592086?pwd=g37mMobCJ1rev3E4kd51qvbDSAKV8Z.1> Meeting ID: 825 8459 2086 Passcode: 596907

Join by phone: 301-715-8592 Meeting ID: 825 8459 2086

Preparing for our January meeting. Our fraternity is facing important decisions in the first half of 2024, as the current Council ends its term in June and most members are unable to serve again. We have agreed to devote our January meeting to discussing the future of our fraternity. Please prayerfully consider your willingness to serve on the Council as well as your openness to merging with another fraternity should we not be able to elect a new Council. Each member will be given an opportunity to speak. Please make every effort to attend this meeting in person (infirm members please join by Zoom) and bring something to share for lunch.

Mark your calendar for our meetings in the first half of 2024: January 21, February 18, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16.

Update on prayers for John Whipple and petitioning Servant of God Julia Greeley.

Our brother John Whipple had to delay beginning treatment for leukemia due to a minor stroke on December 26, but he should be able to begin in early January. Please pray daily for his recovery from the stroke as well as a full cure for leukemia. Please remember our fraternity is supporting the campaign for canonization of our Secular Franciscan sister Julia Greeley, a formerly enslaved woman who died in 1918 after a life

of exemplary service to the poor, by asking Julia to intercede for John. Find information about Julia and the cause for her canonization here: <https://juliagreeley.org/>.

Update on Fr. Gardiner. Our spiritual assistant Fr. Gardiner remains in Carroll Manor (behind Providence Hospital in NE DC) as he recovers from heart surgery. Please pray for him daily, call, and visit if you can. He is mostly in bed and does not always hear the phone but enjoys visitors. Carroll Manor permits visitors 9 am-9 pm daily and there is an easy check-in system by kiosk at the entrance as well as easy parking.

Please pray for our members: Amy Bilyeau, Maria Louisa Correa and family, Sarah Faizi and friend Ron Harner, Jean Fleurival, Fr. Jim Gardiner, Nancy McCleary, John Whipple, Soledad Wong. (Thank you to Sarah Faizi for compiling this list monthly!)

Contacting Council

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Our fraternity website:

<https://dcsfo.org/>

January Reflection

Michele Dunne, OFS

Near the end of his life, St. Francis told his brothers, “I have done what was mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours.” As we begin 2024, I can think of no better question to take to the Lord in prayer and to ask each other: what is ours to do this year?

If you feel a bit overwhelmed by that question, it might be that you—like me—tend to think that whatever is yours to do this year must be something extra on top of everything you are already doing: prayer, service, work, family obligations, fraternity obligations, etc. Or that your health or other circumstances do not permit you to do anything new.

When I was working with our OFS sisters and brothers from another fraternity on our Advent Day of Reflection, we discussed what St. Francis did at Greccio to make the Incarnation real and tangible in his time and what we feel called to do in our time. One

of the other members said, “I always feel guilty and overwhelmed by questions like that; I just can’t do any more than I am already doing!”

As I thought later about that conversation, I realized that it is not necessarily a matter of doing more but perhaps doing something different. Maybe what God is calling me to do is not to pile more and more tasks on top of an already busy schedule—and certainly not to strain my health or resources to the breaking point—but to set different priorities and do different things to serve Him at this time. What might that look like in 2024?

When I entered formation in January 2014, ten years ago this month, I found it exciting to set my feet on a path of spiritual growth that I expected to last the remainder of my life. And that turned out to be correct; I have found that God has opened one spiritual door after another in front of me over the past ten years, giving me many opportunities to grow as a Secular Franciscan. All I need is to remain faithful to my Franciscan vocation, open to seeing the doors that God opens before me, and brave enough to step through at least some of them.

How might God be showing you what is yours to do as a Secular Franciscan in 2024? And what is ours to do as a fraternity of followers of Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis? Please pray about this and come ready to discuss it on January 21. Meanwhile, I wish you a very blessed beginning to this new year!

