

Dominican Retreat & Conference Center

1945 Union Street, Niskayuna, New York 12309
(518) 393-4169 www.dslcnny.org

Solitude on a Busy Highway

The Good News

September 2020

For everything there is a season...does that mean that October through December is an everything season... sure seems so.

In October, there's Halloween—costumes and trick or treating or bobbing for apples at home? This is the time to harvest and ready gardens for winter. It will be time to rake leaves, check furnace filters, clean fireplaces, and stack wood in preparation for the dropping temperatures.



November – Elections are happening...in person or by mail? Veterans Day when we remember our country's heroes...probably without parades.



Thanksgiving—will this be the traditional celebration or a scaled down version with Zoom visitors? With the hardship and losses many of us have suffered and witnessed this year will we have to dig deeper to remember, in spite of it all, we have much to be thankful for?

December brings Advent, a time for Waiting, Reflection and Hope. (Right now, we can't plan, we can only hope.)



And then Christmas. Will we shopping in stores and malls or be relegated to e-tail only? Will we be mailing gifts rather than delivering them in person? Will we celebrate midnight mass in front of the television? And, I would venture a guess that ringing in the new year will look different this year.



We at the Retreat House wish you the best for all parts of the “everything season” with the hope that we can think of it as a time for making new memories that will be shared for generations.

Mother Cabrini Health Foundation Grant Award Received

We are pleased to announce that the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation recently awarded the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center a \$142,000 grant to fund a new program named *Spiritual Sanctuary*. Its purpose is to strengthen and expand our services to more effectively meet the spiritual needs of a growing population of Seniors, Persons With Disabilities and 12-Step Program Members.

Thanks to the funding from the Cabrini Foundation, we are able to better equip the Retreat Center through several purchases which will help our retreatants feel more comfortable and improve their program participation. We are hard at work planning a schedule of retreats, prayer services and faith formation events, upgrading the audio system, improving handicap access, purchasing the necessary equipment for a quality shift to virtual events, and obtaining a few recliners for seniors to use in bedrooms. In addition, we are able to offer scholarship and transportation funding for anyone with limited means.

There is mounting evidence that providing for our spiritual needs benefits our physical and mental health, strengthens our coping skills, and encourages healthier practices. Sister Sue notes, “The launch of our *Spiritual Sanctuary* has arrived at just the right time when those among us at highest risk of Coronavirus need a safe shelter that will protect and soothe the soul and strengthen one's faith. Offering our people *Spiritual Sanctuary* in a group setting (virtually or onsite) will strengthen their sense of community, deepen their faith, and enrich their relationship with God.”

For more information please call (518)393-4169 or email us at dslcnny@nybiz.rr.com.



What Will My Retreat Look Like in a Covid-19 World? Part II

In our last newsletter, we gave some ideas of what retreat might look like in this new reality and some of you did send in your ideas for what would make you feel safe. Again, first and foremost, we will be following CDC guidelines and the guidelines of our state, region, and county in order to make sure we are doing everything in our control to make each of you and our staff as safe as possible.

For those coming into the retreat house, you will see and need to do the following:

- ◆ Everyone will have to wear masks
- ◆ Your temperature will be taken with a non-contact thermometer and you will sign a waiver regarding any symptoms or traveling (*If you are not feeling well or have traveled from restricted states in the last 14 days, please stay home*)
- ◆ The size of the group in house will be limited to 13 and each retreatant will have their own bathroom stall to use
- ◆ Sanitizer is placed throughout the building and we ask that you wash hands frequently
- ◆ 6 ft social distancing is required and chairs will be spaced out in order to do so
- ◆ Each person will be sitting at their own table in the dining room and if you are here for more than one meal, you will have the same table each time.
- ◆ The buffet line has distance markers and our staff will serve your meal from behind clear shields.
- ◆ We will be using cleaning supplies known to kill the virus instead of our scent free options
- ◆ The retreat conferences will be videoed so that others can participate on line at the same time as those in the retreat house.
- ◆ We will spread out the bedrooms being used and will not use the same bedrooms two programs in a row
- ◆ More programs may not have mass included and those that do will follow the guidelines of the diocese

What Types of Retreats are Being Offered Now?

Virtual Retreats – These retreats will be either via Zoom or Facebook Live.

Zoom retreats require registering with us so that we can either send you a link so that you can participate via your computer, iPad, or smartphone and be able to see the speaker and other participants. Or you can also participate via phone in which case we will need to get a specific phone number to you. You will be able to hear everything and can even participate in the break out groups (small group sharing) but will not be able to view anything.

Facebook Live requires a device that allows you to connect with Facebook – basically anything but a traditional phone. You do not have to have a Facebook account. You simply search for Dominican Retreat and Conference Center Facebook and at the time of the program you will see a live video that you can click on to watch. You can see us, but no one can see you and no preregistrations is required.

Hybrid Retreats – These retreats will be programs where we hope to have some participants in the retreat house and *at the same time*, we will be livestreaming the presentation via Zoom or Facebook Live so that others can participate virtually from their homes. **Reminder: In-house participants will be limited to the first 13 people registered.**

On the following pages, please note the type of retreat in the listing. Aware that our current reality can change in an instant, know that we will continue to monitor and change a format if necessary in order to protect the safety of everyone.



From the Desk of the Administrator:

I am not an athlete. Never have been. Suspect I never will be. This is probably not news to any of you who know me! But what I admire in athletes is their discipline, persistence and endurance. And as I reflect on these past months, it is clear to me how much we have needed those three traits. It has not been easy to create new routines for ourselves as we moved through our days. That takes discipline.

My hope is that you created a space for your prayer life in the midst of those routines. It has not been easy to find the energy day after day to put one foot in front of another on ground that was constantly shifting. That takes persistence. My hope is that you have found support from your life of faith that allowed you to keep taking that next step. It has not been easy to remain hopeful amidst the struggles for that which we cannot see – a steady income, a “normal” way of life, an end to fear of illness, violence and death. That takes endurance. My hope is that you know that you are embraced by a God who loves you fiercely and *will not let you go!* So...whether or not we run or swim or train for any sport, we can act like athletes in this challenging new reality, and hopefully, when we have seen this time through, we, like Paul in his letter to Timothy, can say, *“I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.”*

Thanksgiving

As we move into the fall season, I am aware that the holidays will be fast upon us. Reflecting on how I/you will celebrate Thanksgiving with our families, friends, and communities may be quite different from last year. These past months have brought major changes to our lives and has called us to face some very difficult situations. Most of us have been dealing with so many emotions that they, at times, seem to be on the verge of overwhelming us. We long for something that can be an anchor of meaning and a source of hope.

My personal time with God assists me in noticing that what I long to hold onto is directly in front of me: God and my human community. Through the efforts of so many people who have placed their own lives in danger helping the sick, the store workers, the bus drivers and transit workers, all the maintenance workers, postal workers, farmers and volunteers who organized the delivery of food from the farms to the meal lines throughout the country, volunteers who daily distributed food to people. The list goes on! All of us together working and being community for each other enabled me to come to a deeper understanding of the Incarnation. *God so loved the world that God entered the world as one of us to reveal fully who God is and who we are.* This is a powerful statement and one that you may want to spend time reflecting on and talking with God.



Each of us in our own way can enter into Thanksgiving this year with deep gratitude and humility knowing that we are all loved by God and that to be truly human is to live in community with respect, kindness, care, and service to each other. What better source of hope for the present and future!!

Sr. Chris Connolly, OP

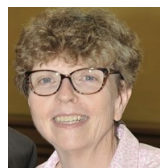
Before, During and After

On June 30, 1992 the Mercy Motherhouse sustained a fire that closed it's doors until December 12, 1994. Since that time, we, as a Community have marked time as before the fire, during the fire and after the fire. “During the fire,” came to mean not just that hot June evening but the time we were out of the house. We learned a lot about ourselves “during the fire.”

During the fire we had to be more intentional about getting together. Our gatherings took place in many other places. In some ways we lost a bit of ourselves. When that time passed and we were able to be back in, perhaps not the exact same place, but a very similar one, we were “home” again in a new way.

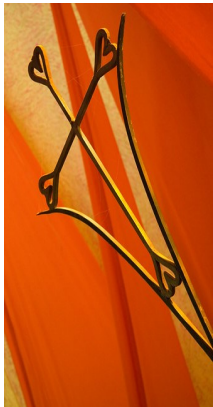
I'm thinking about how Pandora the Pandemic may be like our fire. It has in some ways “displaced us.” It has taken us out of our comfort zones. It has taken us away from the familiar. It may have even caused us to feel a bit lost. When this ends, and it will end eventually, I hope that, like the fire, it will help us to find new ways to be at “home.” When things feel heavy and sad, maybe we can think about how we want to be in our “after the Pandemic,” world and life. We can ask God to shape it in our hearts and minds, so that we will be ready when it gets here and we are once again, “home.”

Sr. Jude Kapp, RSM



A Note of Gratitude

A special thank you to all of you who have generously donated to the ministry here at the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center during these difficult months. Your prayers and financial support of this ministry mean more than you know. You have our heartfelt thanks! Let us continue to hold each other in prayer.



Sung Vespers in the Spirit of Taize

7:00-8:00 on Facebook Live

Find Dominican Retreat and Conference Center and look for the live video.

Thursday, October 15th

Thursday, November 19th

Thursday, December 17th

FREE WILL OFFERING



Celebrating Diversity—through the eyes of Spirituality

Tuesday —7-8:30 PM (virtual program via Zoom)

Sept. 29 - *The Experience of a Latina American with Sr. Ana Gonzalez, OP*

Oct. 6—*The Experience of a Native American with Sr. Kateri Mitchell, SSA*

Oct. 13—*The Experience of a Black American with Colette Parker, OPA*

Oct. 20—*The Experience of the LGBTQ Community with Stephanie Battaglini*

Date TBA -*The Experience of an Asian American with Fr. Lin Hoang, OFM*

Cost: \$15 each or \$75 for all five

United in Love—Four Carmelite Saints



Therese of Lisieux
October 1st



Teresa of Avila
October 8th



John of the Cross
October 22nd



Edith Stein
October 29th

October is a month of feasts. We will explore the lives of these two saints and their ‘friends’

Thursday, October 1st, 8th, 22nd and 27th –7PM - 8:30 Via Zoom

Cost : \$15 for one session or \$55 for all four

Presenter: Victoria L. Battell. An experienced educator and currently Chief Mission Officer at Maria College, Albany.



NATIVE SPIRITS

Join BRO. MICKEY Mc GRATH as he shares
Art, Stories, and Inspirations of Native American spirituality
with a special guest appearance by Black Elk scholar
DAMIAN COSTELLO.

October 2nd-4th

This unique hybrid retreat will explore the wisdom and heritage of the indigenous people of the woodland and plains through the lives of two saintly figures: **SAINT KATERI TEKAKWITHA**, who was Mohawk and Algonquin and **SERVANT OF GOD NICHOLAS BLACK ELK**, an Oglala Sioux. They lived in very different times and cultures, but each was formed in the Christian faith by the Jesuits and each has lessons to share for our church and nation which are more relevant than ever.

As always with a Bro. Mickey retreat, creative prayer activity will be included.

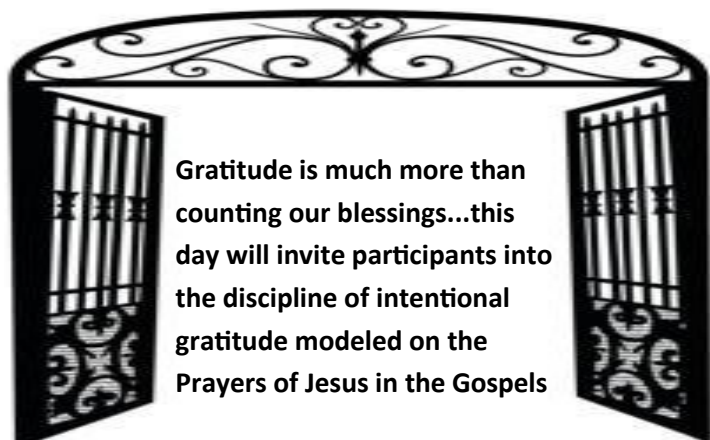
Cost: : In- house—\$205. Virtual - \$75

Thanksgiving Day of Reflection

Thursday, November 5th—9:45 AM - HYBRID

Cost: In house \$30, Virtual \$20

Gratitude as the Gateway to Revelation



Gratitude is much more than counting our blessings...this day will invite participants into the discipline of intentional gratitude modeled on the Prayers of Jesus in the Gospels

Theme Retreat for Men

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.”

Friday, November 6th—Sunday, November 8th

Cost: in house—\$205 Virtual - \$75

A weekend away from your daily routine for rest, quiet, learning, reflection, inner healing, growth, prayer and sharing.

Director for Both of these Retreats: Fr. Raymond Dlugos, OSA, Augustinian Friar from the Villanova Province. Fr. Ray is currently Vice-President for Mission & Ministry at Merrimack College. Director:



12 Step Day of Gratitude in November

Via Zoom

TBA—call or check our website for more details



Virtual Directed Retreat via Zoom

Monday, November 9th—Friday November 13th

Director: Sr. Chris Connolly, OP

A directed retreat offers the participants the opportunity to spend a week in silence and solitude so you can focus on your personal relationship with God while at the same time savoring what is happening.

Our daily schedule has two meeting times. An individual session (morning or afternoon) with Sr. Chris followed by a 3:30 pm prayer service with the retreatants. It will be important for each of you to create a prayerful environment for silence and reflection so that you will be able to better listen to God. You can use times outside of your prayer time for rest, relaxation, journaling, walking, art, music, etc.

The retreat will begin on Monday, November 9 at 10:00 am with introductions, prayer, sharing, questions and setting up our daily individual meetings. Cost: \$100



HYBRID Weekend Retreat for Women

Heart & Soul Quest : You Don't have to be a Superhero to be Courageous!

Friday, November 20th—Sunday, November 22nd

As women we don't often describe ourselves as courageous.

So come, gather with others as—together— we explore what courage looks like in our lives.

Director: Sr. Sue Zemgulis, OP Cost: In house—\$205. Virtual - \$75



Complete this REGISTRATION FORM and include with deposit (\$50.00 non-refundable for Weekend Registration) To save time and postage, Credit Card Reservations can be faxed (518-393-4525) phoned in (518-393-4169)	
Mr. Mrs. Ms. Other _____	Name: _____ Address: _____
City/St/Zip _____ Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (c) _____	
E-mail _____ Diet/room need _____	
Please register me for the following Program: _____ Date _____	
Deposit: \$ _____ Check #: _____ Coupon _____	
Credit Card: M/C Visa Discover # _____ Exp. _____	
_____ Print name as it appears on card for clarification	For Office Use only: _____ BK _____ DB _____ List _____ Conf Code: _____

"PEACE IN OUR HEARTS AND IN OUR WORLD"

VIRTUAL PRAYER EXPERIENCE (FORMAT TBA)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11TH



Join us in praying for peace

7:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Music, Presentation, Prayer

Led by Dominican Sisters and Associates of Peace and Staff of DRCC

Free Will Offering

Advent Silent Retreat Weekend for Women and Men

December 4th-6th

As we move more deeply into our Advent season, watching and waiting, consider joining with others in prayer and silence. Unlike previous years, this in house weekend retreat will allow you to move deeply into the silence in whatever way you choose to use it.

Prayer experiences throughout the weekend will be provided by the staff of the DRCC.

Cost: \$205

The Light Will Come: Hope and Patient Waiting in Advent Prayer and Reflection in the format of Lectio Divina

Virtual Program via Zoom Mondays—7-8:30 PM

November 30th, December 7th, December 14th, December 21st

Presenter: Victoria Battell

Cost \$15 each or \$55 for all four

Advent Morning Program - 10-11:30

December 1st, 8th, and 15th

Give yourself an Advent gift of time—to slow down, reflect with others and remember what all the hustle and bustle is really about.

Presenter: Anita Davidson, OPA

Virtual via Zoom

Cost: \$15 each or \$40 for all three





DRCC Recovery Corner Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Even though I may feel and think that my addiction did not cause others pain and suffering, I must remember that I do not live my life in a vacuum. My life is always “rubbing shoulders” with others: the members of my family, friends, co-workers, neighbors and – so to think about that my active addiction was void of relational damage is to live in denial.

Working Step 8 is not easy. I find myself filled with anticipation, anxiety about living to make amends; that is, a face-to-face admission of my shameful conduct which caused untold pain and anguish, more than I can even begin to comprehend.

I am told that the first part of Step 8 is about simply **making a list** of those I harmed through my active addiction. That sounds easy enough! But as I begin to contemplate the names on my list I am again caught up in the “blame game.” Some names are easy and reasonable, others not so easy as I recall past hurts and angers wrought upon me. So, the resentments just well up within me. I cannot hold onto these resentments lest they corrupt the work that has already been accomplished. So I remember –I am just making a list And simply leave it at that.

The second part of Step 8 is **becoming willing** to make amends. Realizing the struggle I am having with some of the names on the list, I know that I need to turn to my Higher Power for the grace to do that which is beyond me: making amends to those who initially hurt me, pushing my buttons and triggering

irrational behavior on my part for retribution sake. I must acknowledge the part I played and accept the consequences.

These amends involve a process of forgiveness – forgiveness with respect to those whom I inflicted pain; which I have discovered helps me in a process of self-forgiveness. Forgiving myself, however, is more difficult. But, I know that the God of my understanding wants me to be free of the guilt and shame that would continue if not let go of; and this is a luxury that I cannot afford.

PRAYER

Higher Power, I am aware of the fact that I need to make amends to those whom I have hurt, for to hold on to the shame and guilt that I often feel is not healthy for me. The thought of doing so with some of the people on my list seems OK, but then there are a few with whom the thought of a face-to-face admission is extremely difficult. I get caught up with what they have done to me, and I get stuck. Grant me the grace that I need to have the courage to look at myself honestly so that I seek the amends for which I am responsible.

Spiritual Groundwork

Take some quiet time for personal reflection. Invite God to help you put together a list of names of the people with whom you need to make amends. After each name write out why you need to make amends to each of these people. If you are having difficulty with any name in particular, pray for that person and for the grace needed to be willing to make amends to that person when the time seems right. Invite your Higher Power to walk through this part of the process with you.

Reproduced by permission from Sister Judith A. Terrameo, OSF, *Pathway to Peace and Inner Freedom: Reflections on the Twelve Steps* (Allegany, NY: The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, 2018).

12 Step Hybrid Presentation

To make a reservation, email us at dslcny@nybiz.rr.com

You can join us for one or both sessions. Doing both will take you deeper, but there will be no repetition.

Money in Recovery

The Spirituality of Money—Friday, October 9th, 7-9 PM

Cost: In-House \$20, Virtual \$15

Financial Serenity and Strategies at Every Stage of Recovery—Saturday, October 10th, 10-3

Cost: In-House \$30, Virtual \$20

Both programs in-House with overnight stay + breakfast \$75

It's not a surprise that money is an important topic for people in recovery. We come into our programs with less income and more shame than the average person. We need to understand how we got here and learn some best practices and strategies—specifically for our own stage of recovery. We'll look at the intersection of our financial lives and our spiritual lives. We'll do this with self-love and compassion—and even humor.

Presenter: Diane Cameron—writer/speaker on recovery and personal growth. Teacher of addiction and recovery, the literature of alcoholism, and making a life in long-term recovery.

Eventless More Than Just Desserts 2020 Contributors

(as of 8-28-2020)

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Lucille Laurenzo
Philip & Janice Livingston
Mary McClaine
Lisa Whitehead

Thank you to all who have contributed to our "Eventless More Than Just Desserts"! As many of you know, this is the one major fundraiser that we have throughout the year that benefits the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center. Although we are not gathering to share in delicious food, delightful music and good company, your support of this ministry is palpable! To date this event has raised over \$11,000. Thank you so much! As we promised, 15 lucky donors will be receiving a **Sweet Delight** that they will be able to enjoy. The MTJD Committee will gather virtually on October 25th – the date we would have held the event – to pull the winning names from those who have contributed to MTJD at that point. Winners will then be notified! Good luck to you all!



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Dominican Spiritual Life Center
1945 Union Street, Niskayuna, NY 12309

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Database Update

A few years ago, we moved our database into another suggested format. After working diligently with it, we have made a decision to change again. We will now be using a format that has been designed specifically for the retreat house to meet all our needs. That being said, moving data back and forth can mean we drop a name, or don't put a mail code in correctly. If you are getting something you do not wish, *please let us know*. If you hear of anyone who has stopped hearing from us, *please let us know*.

We will soon also transition our email format. We at the retreat house have been sending out weekly emails providing "*Thoughts on Prayer*" and updates on the status of programs here. **If you have not been receiving these emails and would like to, or would like to receive the newsletter in full color via email when the next one comes out, please contact us!** Call us at (518) 393-4169 or email us at dslcnny@nybiz.rr.com to request that we put you on our email list. If you are emailing us, PLEASE INCLUDE your Name, Email address, Mailing address and Phone number so that we can accurately match your information to our database (You would be surprised at how many people have the same or similar names!)

Just a Note: Spiritual Direction during this time IS AVAILABLE

via phone or Zoom!

Contact Sr. Chris at (518) 393-4169 for more information.

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