

2017–2020 REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY

Holy Thursday
April 9, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

"A servant of God cannot know how much patience and humility he has within himself as long as he is content."

St. Francis of Assisi ~ Admonition XIII

Patience

I have read recently that this is the "**lentiest Lent**" we have ever experienced. At first I chuckled, but it is so true. Since Ash Wednesday, slowly but surely, we have not only given up sweets or coffee, but we have had to give up many of the outward things that define us. Some of us have not only suffered inconvenience. Some have lost their jobs, their health and some have lost their lives. We have all lost the ability to be together in fraternity, to be together at Mass, to be together with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Our patience is being tested and honed. We cannot control our circumstances, but in humility we can respond. As Catholics and as Franciscans, **we are being transformed.** This is what we are about. We are meeting the challenges presented to us with patience and creativity.

Can't **gather**? Oh yes, we can. By conference call and video chat.

Can't **hug**? Oh yes, we can. That phone call you make means more than you can know.

Can't **pray together**? Oh yes, we can. We are praying the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy together with each other and with the whole world.

Can't **attend Mass**? Oh yes, we can. From a live-streamed parish Mass to Mass with our bishops and the Holy Father, we have joined with the **world** in celebrating the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Can't get a **blessing**? Oh yes, we can. When have we had the opportunity to receive a Plenary Indulgence directly from the Pope along with millions of others?

Can't **receive Communion**? Well, maybe not, and that takes **real** patience. **BUT** the millions of **Spiritual Communions** being made each day strengthen our collective belief in and longing for the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Humility

Each time we cover our faces or step aside so others can be safe; or wait our turn or stay inside when we prefer to be outside; or only take one item off the shelf when we could take two, **we are living our call to patience and humility**. When we accept and obey, without whining and criticizing, the guidelines set up for our safety and all the things that are now different, we are giving up our own will and **we are following in the footsteps of Jesus who carried a cross much heavier than ours could ever be**.

So, my brothers and sisters, with **patience and humility**, we go from the lentiest Lent, to Easter.

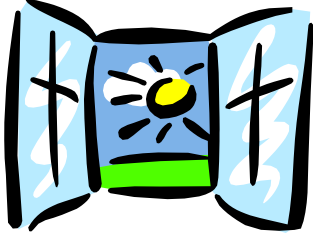
This will be an Easter when we will have the time to really appreciate the **new life** around us. A friend's Pastor wrote that this Easter will actually be more like the first Easter when the Apostles rejoiced, but also kept to themselves and were afraid and worried about what was to come. We may be struggling, but **our faith helps us to KNOW that when we reach out to our Risen Savior, he will bring us through this**.

Let's continue to pray for one another. On behalf of the Regional Executive Council, I wish each one of you peace, patience and joy during these sacred days.

Many blessings,
Diane

(Also below is the special Holy Saturday prayer which was and is a tradition in my family.)

*Diane F. Menditto, OFS
Chair, National Formation Commission
Minister, Our Lady of the Angels Region*



The Open Window

Lord Jesus Christ, remove from this house
And my heart all anger and bitterness.
Cast out all evil through this open window,
And come into my home as a most welcome guest.

Fill this house and my heart with
The fresh air of your love and
The healing power of your Resurrection.

Remember, also, those who have gone
Before us in faith, especially _____,
That they may rejoice with you
In Paradise this Easter.

Beginning at 12 Noon on Holy Saturday, visit each room of your house. Open a window and say the following prayer. Continue until you have visited all rooms saying the prayer each time.